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ENGLISH STATESMEN

SINCE THE PEACE OF 1815.

BY

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*INTENDED ORIGINALLY FOR THE USE OF MECHANICS'
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PREFACE.

I WISH it to be known that the following Sketches were not originally designed for publication in their present form, but intended only to fill an occasional column in a popular magazine. The history of them is as follows:—It was thought by the conductors of a magazine, intended especially for the working classes, that, under present circumstances, a series of short articles upon the last and present generation of English Statesmen would be not only popular, but useful. In conformity with this view, the following short “studies,” as I may call them, were written for the “People’s Magazine,” the object of them being, not so much to give biographical accounts of the various statesmen introduced, as to define the exact place which each has filled in the chain of political history, and the precise work that each contributed, in his day, to the general result now before us. It seems

that, for some reason, this method of treatment did not meet with the approval of the proprietors, who had expected, I believe, more biography and less politics than it was consistent with my plan to furnish. It was, therefore, suggested to me, that I should place them in the hands of the late Editor, to be disposed of at his own discretion. The result was an arrangement with Messrs Bemrose, by which they were to be brought out in the shape of a separate volume ; and, I have merely to add, that, although it would not have occurred to me to write "a book" upon this subject, partly because I have already travelled over a good deal of the same ground in another work, partly because an original work seems to require a *raison d'être* of its own not always to be found in the wants of periodical literature, nevertheless, as the Sketches were in existence, I saw no reason why they should not be given to the public. They are incomplete, but I hope they are not inaccurate ; and I hope, too, their incompleteness is not of a character to defeat their primary intention.

T. E. KEBBEL.

TEMPLE, February 19, 1868.

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ORIGINAL INTRODUCTION.

AT a time when the working men of England are aspiring to make their voice heard in the government of this great empire, and when they are told almost every day that it is for them to effect a change in the policy which has directed our councils for many generations, in order that the true happiness of the people may be more effectually promoted, it may be well for them to study with some attention our more recent political history, and to ascertain for themselves what the scope of that policy really was, and to what extent it is still upheld by the governing classes of the kingdom. To this end we have thought we shall be consulting the original design of the *People's Magazine*, by giving to our readers a few brief sketches of the principal statesmen who, since the termination of the great war, have determined the action of our Government both in foreign and domestic matters. During the last twenty years so great a mass of private papers relating to the history of our chief ministers of State

have been made public, that we are now in a much better position than were our fathers to judge of their honesty and wisdom. Among political students and writers it is well known that the estimate which formerly prevailed of several distinguished men has undergone a great change during the last quarter of a century in consequence of these publications; but the popular opinion of them remains to this day pretty nearly what it was before. And one object of the present series is to explain to that class of readers to whom the more expensive periodicals and works on history and politics are comparatively inaccessible, what was the real character and creed of those men whom one party long worshipped as idols, and another execrated as fiends. More than this, while clearing our views of the particular ministers who have guided the helm of the State, we shall be able to obtain a deeper insight into the nature, the origin, and the expediency of those theories with which their names are associated. And it is needless to say that he makes but an indifferent reformer who does not thoroughly understand what it is that he is going to reform.

LORD CASTLEREAGH.

THE position of Great Britain in 1815, though externally glorious and triumphant, was, in regard to domestic affairs, replete with elements of discord. The Radical party, which the French Revolution had called into being in this country, had been silenced in presence of the common danger which threatened us in the empire of Napoleon. At all events, so overwhelming a majority of the nation had declared against it, that, if not silent, it was harmless. But with the return of peace, the revolutionary spirit again reared its head and lifted up its voice on high. It was perfectly natural that it should. With much that was exaggerated and ludicrous in the Radicalism of 1793, large elements of truth were intermingled. A great many abuses, a great many bad laws, a great deal of real misgovernment, the growth of a century of

prosperity and apathy, called loudly for redress. None of these had been mitigated during the twenty years of war that followed. And we may safely say, that whatever reasons for reform held good before the murder of Louis, survived in still greater weight after the reduction of Napoleon.

With equal, then, if not greater justification for popular discontent than had existed at the end of the last century, were there any circumstances in the condition of the country likely to make the people more patient, and possess more confidence in their rulers? At first sight, it might appear that the height of power and splendour to which England had then risen, through a long and unbroken course of victories both by sea and land, was such a circumstance. And, doubtless, to some extent it was so. But against the good effects of the loyalty and enthusiasm so created, we have to set down several counteracting forces, which stamped out for a time even the memories of Wellington and Nelson.

Between 1793 and 1816 lay all the difference that lies between a people which has, and a people which has not, eaten of the tree of the knowledge of political good and evil. That individuals, and even

nations, may rise eventually to a higher moral life through the discipline of sin and sorrow than they ever could have reached while remaining in a state of innocence, is a doctrine not unknown to moralists. But there is one particular virtue which must inevitably be sacrificed in the process, that simple reverence — namely, for constituted authorities, which relieves the business of government from half its difficulties. This sentiment, though not dead in the English people so early as 1816, had begun to sicken at the root. Europe could never be after the French Revolution what she had been before; nor could England. Neither could regain her innocence. Again, in 1793 the world had had no recent experience of what revolutionary governments could do, and they were generally identified with communism, atheism, and national bankruptcy. In 1816 the world had grown wiser, and had learned that it was possible for countries to be well governed even after all their old traditions and institutions had been broken down. It was gradually coming to be believed by a considerable section of the middle classes that the internal condition of France, however she had

suffered from the war, had been greatly improved by the Revolution. In 1793 England had a king upon the throne who was recognised everywhere to be a man of courage and ability, and had won the love of his subjects by sympathy with the national prejudices and conformity to the national virtues. In 1816 the country was governed by a Regent, who, even if he possessed some of these good qualities, had enjoyed no opportunity of proving them, while his deficiency in others, and those, perhaps, the most important, was the talk of every pothouse in the kingdom. In 1793 there was little or no distress throughout the country, and the working classes were warmly attached to our institutions. But from the battle of Waterloo to about the death of George the Third the sufferings of this class were very great. A sudden change from war to peace, however beneficial in the long run, can never fail to press heavily on particular classes in the community. All the trades which thrive on war—outfitters, contractors, armourers, and a host of others—were shorn at once of half their profits, and forced to dispense with half their workmen. The farmer and the grazier beheld ruin staring him in

the face, and the peasantry suffered in proportion. Unhappily, this state of things was rather aggravated than diminished by the remedial measures which Government was persuaded to adopt. The corn-laws relieved the tenant-farmer, but aggravated the general distress ; and to these reasonable causes of discontent was now added another which, though not reasonable, was decidedly not unnatural—the substitution of machinery for hand-labour.

Thus the reader will perceive that, to aid them in dealing gradually and carefully with evils of ancient growth and great vitality, the ministry of the day had, instead of the loyal and prosperous population of thirty years before, a population irritated by sufferings which they could not understand, and stimulated by examples to which they had previously been strangers. Religious disabilities, negro slavery, the hardships of the criminal code, the cumbersome machinery of the law courts, the game laws, the bankruptcy laws, Boroughs with nobody to vote, and Corporations with nothing to do—these constituted heavy arrears to be cleared off, and needed all the support which Government could have received from a peaceable and friendly nation.

But the nation was neither peaceable nor friendly. After the first effervescence of joy at our military glories, culminating in the battle of Waterloo, had subsided, the people grew impatient of their sufferings, and made no allowance for delays which they naturally supposed to be intentional. The Government, on the other hand, grew equally impatient of remonstrance, and made no allowance for discontent which they as naturally supposed to be "republican." Besides, there is indeed one other source of the grievous misunderstanding between the people and the Crown which arose during the period aforesaid, to which, perhaps, public attention has not been sufficiently directed. The ministry of that day were involved in a most laborious and perplexing diplomacy. The difficulties of reform bequeathed to them by the long war were scarcely more formidable than the task of readjusting our relations with the various continental powers which the war had thrown into confusion. It so happened that the two best minds among the Tories, under the regency of George the Fourth, both belonged to men who had made foreign affairs, not domestic policy, their study. These

men, overloaded by the work of their own departments, had no time to spare for the consideration of those grievances which led to Peterloo and Cato Street. Herein really lies the great excuse for the shortcomings of the Tory Government of that day. Not that they did nothing. On the contrary, they addressed themselves with energy and success to the reduction of taxation, to the reform of the currency, and to other social questions of great importance. But it is quite true that, down to the death of Mr Canning, in 1827, our foreign policy had been a question of such paramount importance as to throw into the shade every other consideration. But this was just the very point which the people would understand least. In our own day the newspapers might have done much to bring the truth before their eyes. But fifty years ago that mode of political education was comparatively in its infancy ; and working men were never taught that domestic reforms were almost inevitably postponed, while we were still engaged in delicate and absorbing negotiations with France, Austria, and Spain.

Perhaps of all the statesmen who ever swayed the councils of this country not one has been the object

of such unmerited calumny as Lord Castlereagh : while few, perhaps, on the other hand, have ever been more effectually vindicated. This eminent man was born in the year 1769, the same which witnessed the birth of the Duke of Wellington, and, as is commonly supposed, of Napoleon Bonaparte. He was sprung from an ancient and powerful family, a younger branch of which was ennobled in the person of the statesman's father, Robert Stewart, in 1789. Passing over his youth and boyhood, which present nothing remarkable, we find that in his twenty-seventh year he was appointed to discharge the duties of Chief Secretary for Ireland, a post then ostensibly occupied by Mr Pelham, who had been recalled to England without, however, at once relinquishing his office. Three years afterwards he succeeded to the name as well as the responsibilities of that dignity.

This, as our readers will remember, was the epoch of the Irish rebellion, and on Lord Castlereagh, of course, devolved a heavy share of those invidious duties which consist in repressing civil war, and in bringing the offenders to justice. Our readers know only too well, the horrors of that dreadful

time; the atrocities perpetrated by both sides; and the vengeance exacted by the conquerors for the losses and outrages which they had endured at the hands of the rebels. But they probably do not know that while the greater part of these iniquities have been visited on the head of Lord Castlereagh, he was the foremost person who laboured to prevent them, and that they were due to mismanagement not only altogether beyond his control, but against which he constantly and vehemently protested. England long refused to believe that Ireland was in real danger. The Irish Protestants loved to think that they wanted no help from England. Hence arose the lamentable error of leaving Ireland denuded of British troops when on the eve of a general insurrection, and, by consequence, of throwing the maintenance of order into the hands of the Irish landowners, who hated the insurgent population with that worst of all hatreds, the hatred of a small ruling caste for aliens in blood and in religion, which it knows to be exasperated against itself by generations of oppression and misgovernment. The result was what might have been

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expected. Horrors of demoniac violence upon one side, repaid by systematic and relentless barbarity on the other. But we have now abundant proof that Lord Castlereagh exerted himself to the very utmost to put a stop to this work of retaliation. His despatches to General Lake and General Stewart, the English commanding officers, teem with the most positive expressions of disgust at it, and contain explicit orders to these gentlemen to exert all their authority to suppress it. At the same time he omitted no opportunity of bringing home to the English Government the real cause of the mischief, and of pressing on them the necessity, in the name both of humanity and good policy, of taking the work of pacification out of the hands of the Orangemen. Thus all that miserable and disgraceful persecution which follows unhappily in the wake of most unsuccessful rebellions ; the chase of unhappy wretches from hovel to hovel, from hill to hill, and from cave to cave ; the burning of cottages and farmsteads ; the insults now offered with impunity to priests and women ; the rapine, the hangings, and the tortures,—was in spite of, not sanctioned by, Lord Castlereagh, and would have been far

worse but for his humane and courageous interference. The Irish Protestant party in the Government was never tired of denouncing his "leniency," and predicting that great disasters would flow from it. But he persevered in their teeth. He obtained an amnesty for all the rebels who should submit within a certain time long before it would have been granted by their native rulers. Thus he forfeited the confidence of one party, while naturally associated with its worst sufferings by the other. For the rebels were likely to draw no distinction between the English Government and the Irish landowners. Between the two his memory was made, and was permitted to continue, odious. He became known to the peasantry as "Bloody Castlereagh," and those who knew better were not unwilling that the epithet should stick to him.

Of Mr Pitt's views in regard to Union and Romish Emancipation he was a warm supporter. The Roman Catholics had been induced to support the act of union by an implied promise that their wrongs would be considered afterwards. When owing to a court intrigue, which there is no necessity to explain here, Mr Pitt was deprived of the

power of fulfilling these just expectations, the Irish secretary resigned with him. Nor was it merely by the tacit assertion of his own honour that he showed his sympathy with the Roman Catholics. The ablest statement of their case ever laid before the British Government proceeded from the pen of Lord Castlereagh.

In 1802 Lord Castlereagh was made president of the Board of Control. And from 1805 to the death of Mr Pitt, and again from April 1807 to September 1809, he was secretary at war, in which position he seems to have displayed much more foresight than his colleagues. However, his conduct in this position does not touch either of the two points we are at present concerned with, namely, his moral character, and that imperial policy with which his name is intimately connected. We pass on, therefore, to his acceptance of the seals of the foreign office, February 28, 1812.*

It is as the chief director of the foreign policy

* He had retired from the war office in 1809 in consequence of a disagreement with Mr Canning, originating in the Walcheren expedition, and ending in a duel.

of this country, from 1812 to 1822, that Lord Castlereagh is best known. We have given an outline of the earlier part of his career, that our readers might know what manner of man he was. But it is with the period now commencing that the portion of his life begins, which is most instructive to the general reader, and has most influenced succeeding generations. We can offer no particular account of the various transactions in which Lord Castlereagh was engaged. It is sufficient to state, in general terms, that he was for the above period the representative of British foreign policy in the eyes of the Continent; that he was several times British plenipotentiary, and that, he steadily supported those political traditions which, modified by Canning and Palmerston, and once violated, much to his own chagrin, by the Earl of Aberdeen, have nevertheless, till quite recent days, prevailed more or less at the foreign office, and have guided our Government on almost all momentous occasions.

What, then, *are* these traditions? whence are they derived? and to what conclusion are they destined? These are interesting questions, as full of vital im-

portance now as they were a century ago ; as necessary to be understood by the people as by the rulers in a country which declares itself self-governed. The traditions are these, we must say so in so many words—that France is our natural enemy, and that Germany is our natural ally. France long was, and still is, the only naval power which was likely to be formidable to England ; and the only military power which was likely to be formidable to Germany. That the appearance of a French fleet on the coast of England should be the signal for a German army to show itself on the Rhine, and that the appearance of a French army on the Rhine should be the signal for an English fleet to show itself on the coast of France, was long the understanding in which both parties securely rested. That was at least a definite and intelligible policy. If it involved us in great responsibilities, it afforded us powerful guarantees. And by adhering to it steadfastly, England had in 1815 attained a position of supremacy among the nations of Europe, which was admitted the other day by a well known Radical reformer, Mr Goldwin Smith, who contented himself with adding, that

England had now lost and must never aspire to regain it. The question we shall hereafter have to consider is this, Whether the guarantee was after all worth the cost ? But as far as concerns Lord Castlereagh, we must remember that he was merely perpetuating a policy which he found established ; and which, on his accession to office, was after many disasters and disappointments about to be crowned with a success more complete and brilliant than had been achieved either by the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, or the Peace of Paris in 1763.

The mention of these famous treaties guides us at once to the original source of that policy which we have here been describing. Down to the Revolution of 1688 it had been pretty much a matter of accident to which of the leading Continental powers England should attach herself. But with the accession of the Prince of Orange to the English throne, our policy received a bias from which it has never since been free. William of Orange was the hereditary enemy of France. France, by espousing the Stuarts, became the present enemy of England. These combined causes threw England into

the arms of the Dutch and German Alliance against the House of Bourbon as long as William lived. Before his death that grand alliance of the European powers, intended to prevent the vast empire which had been governed by the Spanish branch of the Hapsburgs from falling into the hands of the Bourbons, was already formed. The ministers of Queen Anne, his successor, belonged to the party which had sympathised with William's views, and they set themselves resolutely to work to carry out his designs. At first, they had the great bulk of the English people on their side. The ambition of Louis XIV. was regarded in those days with as much terror as the ambition of the Bonapartes has inspired in our own and our fathers' days. In addition to this, he had recognised the son of James II. as King of England. The English people went heartily into all the alliances, and made no objection to any of the subsidies, which were deemed essential to that great war, in which we added the victories of Marlborough to the military glories of the empire. But if we examine for ourselves the history of the epoch, we shall see that it was an exact counterpart of the system that has been so violently

condemned in the hands first of Mr Pitt, and afterwards of Lord Castlereagh. Lavish subsidies, which created the National Debt; ungrateful and treacherous allies, who frequently endangered and sometimes ruined the best laid schemes of Great Britain; and a peace which left us much glory and little substantial profit, sum up the history of what is called the war of the Spanish succession. Nevertheless, it had read a wholesome warning to the French Government, who never after that time ventured to take any open or decided part in favour of the exiled family. But their claim still existed, and was sufficiently well supported by their adherents in this country to compel successive Whig Governments to lean on the alliance of those powers who had been our allies in the great war against Louis. It might have been that this alarm would soon have died out. But the accession of a German Prince to the English throne in 1714, supplied the same additional stimulus to an anti-French policy, which the accession of a Dutch one had done in 1689. So that, first of all, Dutch antipathies to France, allied with English Whiggism, and subsequently German antipathies to France, allied with

English Whiggism, engendered between them that system of foreign policy to which Lord Castlereagh was heir. Again in 1742, and again in 1756, the same system was put in motion ; the same system of subsidising foreign powers, of hiring foreign troops, and of fighting tooth and nail with Germany against what we chose to think our natural enemy. We desire that our readers should ponder well on these facts, because too many persons are apt to suppose that the system in question came in with the French Revolution, and was invented and handed down to us by the statesmen of that epoch. It was no such thing. The system was the creation of the Whig party ; and in its origin was defensible on the best of all pleas, the plea of necessity. The Hanoverian succession—perhaps the independence of the Church of England—could have been upheld in no other way. And it is open to any man to argue that the universal empire aimed at by Napoleon I. could have been prevented in no other way. But what we are concerned to show is, that before Lord Castlereagh was born, much more before he began to take any part in public affairs, this policy had become the settled traditionary policy of Eng-

land, and could no more be given up in a day than Rome could be built in a day. Moreover, it was not in its commencement a Tory policy. And twice during the eighteenth century the Tories put an end to war which the Whigs had begun, very much to the disgust of the latter party. What, therefore, we wish the people to understand is this, that the policy towards the Continent which we are now discussing has not been a party policy, but an official policy. The Tories opposed it when they were *out* of office. The Whigs opposed it when they were *out* of office. But both, though not in equal degrees, were obliged to become its administrators when they were *in* office. And it is now for the people of England to consider this policy on its merits, dismissing from their minds the notion that it is peculiar to either of the two great parties which have alternately governed Great Britain since the restoration of Charles II.

To the door of Lord Castlereagh in particular, however, something more is laid than mere compliance with a political tradition. All the alliances we had formed with the German Powers, previous to 1815, had been directed solely to the preservation

of the balance of power. Right or wrong, they bore exclusively on questions of international interest. But after the French Revolution the absolute governments of the Continent formed themselves into a league for the protection of monarchy, and stood pledged to assist each other against all insurrectionary movements. This was not the Holy Alliance, which was a mere pious phantasm of the Emperor Alexander, intended to prevent the possibility of future wars between the contracting powers, but having no special reference to forms of government or to the dangers of rebellion. The Holy Alliance was constituted at Paris in the month of September 1815, and Lord Castlereagh declined to join it, not because he saw anything objectionable in its principles, but because, being signed by the sovereigns in person, and not by their ministers, it was impossible for a constitutional monarchy to accede to it. It was five years later, when the revolutionary spirit had broken out afresh against the Spanish and Italian Bourbons, that those engagements were entered into by despotic powers, which were really hostile to liberty, and are supposed to have been approved of by Lord

Castlereagh, if he did not think proper to take part in them.

At the congress of Troppau, in 1820, the courts of Austria, Russia, and Prussia laid down the principle that all political reforms must proceed from the head of the State, and that all which proceeded from below must be crushed by the combined action of the three. Early in 1821, the allied sovereigns assembled again at Laybach, when it was determined to put this new principle in force against the Neapolitan insurgents. In the following year the Greek question, the Spanish question, and the South American question, all seemed to require the assemblage of a third congress, which accordingly was appointed to meet at Verona in September 1822. These were the three occasions—Troppau, Laybach, and Verona—when the new doctrine of the Absolutists was brought under the notice of Lord Castlereagh; and on each occasion he not only refused his adhesion to it, but condemned it in the most emphatic terms. On the first occasion his instructions to the British envoy were “to decline in a manner likely to give the least umbrage to the Emperor of Russia, the recent

overtures which had been made for converting the Holy Alliance into a mutual insurance system." On the second occasion he pointed out, in a circular addressed to the other powers, that such a scheme was "diametrically opposed to the fundamental laws of Great Britain," and went on to show, over and above, what a fatal precedent it might afford hereafter for intervention of a very different kind from that contemplated by the contracting Sovereigns. On the third occasion, in the instructions which he drew up for the Duke of Wellington, who was to represent the English Government at Verona, he expressed himself more strongly still. The duke was instructed to say, with regard to Spain, that the internal government of that country was a question with which no foreign power "had the smallest right to interfere;" and it was added, that the recognition of the Southern States of America was "only a question of time."

Here, therefore, we see a distinct point at which Lord Castlereagh took his stand. He was a statesman of the old school, no doubt, who was prepared to abide by the old eighteenth century system of German alliances. But with the new nineteenth

century doctrine, which it was now sought to graft on to it, he would have nothing whatever to do. We must beg of our readers to remember this distinction for the future. The foreign policy introduced into this country at the Revolution, and steadily adhered to for at least a century and a half, was one thing ; the foreign policy required of us after the peace was another. Lord Castlereagh represents the first. But no English statesman, to whatever party he belonged, has ever ratified the second. The policy of Lord Castlereagh was rather developed than modified by Mr Canning. And in our next article we shall trace its progress in his hands. Our domestic policy at this epoch will be more fitly described when we come to those statesmen who are more peculiarly connected with the internal government of the country.

The tragic end of Lord Castlereagh is well known. He felt acutely the separation which had taken place between himself and his former friends the allied sovereigns. Other responsibilities connected with the state of this country weighed heavily upon him. Under the combined burden his reason tottered. Several days he showed symptoms of

mental aberration, and was closely watched by his attendants. But at length on the morning of the 12th of August he obtained possession of a pen-knive, with which he cut his throat, and almost immediately expired.

MR CANNING.

THE successor of Lord Castlereagh at the Foreign Office was the Right Honourable George Canning : Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1796 to 1801 ; Treasurer of the Navy in Pitt's second administration ; Foreign Secretary under the Duke of Portland ; President of the Board of Control from 1816 to 1820, when he resigned in consequence of some difference with his colleagues regarding the trial of Queen Caroline ; and Foreign Secretary again from 1822 to 1826.

Mr Canning was born in London on the 11th of April 1770. He was descended from an ancient family of English gentry, which, towards the latter end of the fifteenth century, became possessed of the estate of Foxcote in Warwickshire, still held by their descendants. A branch of this family, from which the great statesman sprang, settled in Ireland in the seventeenth century, and seems to have

been a zealous adherent of the Protestant and Orange faction. The statesman's father, who was eldest son, and heir to the Irish property of Garvagh, afterwards erected into a barony, quarrelled with his relations, and lost his inheritance in consequence. He first fell in love against the parental orders ; and when the match was broken off, still determined, if possible, to cross the prejudices of his family, he espoused a new mistress still more unpalatable to the Tory lord of Garvagh than the old one in the shape of Whig principles. This completed his disgrace. He was turned out of doors ; and came to seek his fortune in London. He soon fell deeply into debt ; and his father took that opportunity of effectually disinheriting him by offering to pay his debts on condition that he might cut off the entail. This was done, and the adventurer was now left to shift as best he could on an allowance of £150 a year, and what he could earn by literature.

Mr Canning was at this time in very good society, and lived with what were called the "wits." He published a variety of fugitive pieces both in prose and verse, which show something of the talent

for which his son was afterwards conspicuous ; but they do not seem to have advanced his fortunes very much. However, undeterred by the gloominess of his prospects, he married, in 1768, Mary-Anne Costello, a beautiful but penniless girl of eighteen, who became the mother of the future Prime Minister. Her husband, weighed down by his anxieties, died a year after the birth of his son, in the fifty-second year of his age. His allowance reverted to his family, and his widow was reduced to destitution. In this extremity she adopted the stage for a livelihood, but never attained anything more than a provincial celebrity. She made an unfortunate marriage with a well-known actor and manager of that day, named Reddish, a man of violent temper and profligate habits. But as good comes out of evil, it is in great measure to that ill-assorted union that her son's rise in life is to be attributed. An uncle settled in London as a merchant was induced to take an interest in the nephew which he had never displayed towards the brother, and removing young George from the dangerous guardianship of Reddish, took him under his own protection. The boy soon repaid the care bestowed on him.

He rapidly distinguished himself, first at Eton, and afterwards at Christchurch. After taking his degree at Oxford, he began to keep terms at Lincoln's Inn. But his abilities had become known to Government. Mr Pitt desired to see him. The interview decided Canning's fate, and in 1793 he was returned to Parliament for the ministerial borough of Newport. His mother still continued on the stage ; nor was it till the year 1801, when he became entitled on his resignation to a pension of £500 a year, that he was enabled to make her independent. Neither before nor since has so singular a phenomenon been witnessed as an English Minister of State speaking nightly in the House of Commons, while his mother was at the same moment playing second-rate parts on a Staffordshire or Yorkshire stage.

Mr Canning was a Tory of the genuine Pitt school. He believed in the royal prerogative ; and in that political theory which holds that the people must be governed, and cannot as a general rule succeed in governing itself. But apart from these general principles he was what we now should call a liberal. That is to say, he was opposed to religious restrictions ; he was a firm friend to nation-

ality; and he held advanced views on commercial and financial questions. It was not, however, till he succeeded to the post, vacated by the death of Lord Castlereagh, that his individual opinions became prominent. From that date, as is popularly supposed, a new school of foreign policy was established in this country, of which the founder was Mr Canning.

It is unjust, however, to the memory of Lord Castlereagh to accredit Mr Canning with the introduction of any new *principles*. We observed in our last article the stage at which our foreign policy had arrived when Lord Castlereagh destroyed his life. Mr Canning merely took it up where his able predecessor left it, and to whatever honour he is entitled as Foreign Minister, he is entitled to for the firmness and lucidity with which that policy was expressed, and the promptitude and energy with which it was carried out; not for the originality which distinguished its conception. The paper of instructions which Lord Castlereagh had drawn up for the guidance of the Duke of Wellington at the forthcoming Congress of Verona was passed on to the Duke by Mr Canning without the alteration of

a word. And in all his despatches to foreign powers, relating to revolutions and repressions, he could use no stronger language than we see everywhere in the despatches of Lord Castlereagh, to the effect—namely, that the internal government of states was a matter to be left exclusively to themselves, and that no foreign power had the shadow of a right to interfere. As regards the recognition of revolted provinces, which have established a *de facto* independence, we see that Lord Castlereagh had anticipated Mr Canning by declaring that the recognition of the South American Republics had become only a question of time. So far, therefore, Mr Canning was treading only in the steps of his predecessor. But there was one advantage he possessed over him, which has not been sufficiently understood, and which undoubtedly gave an appearance of vigour and independence to the new minister's administration, which had been less visible in the previous one—Mr Canning had been wholly unconnected with the Foreign Office for the space of fifteen years.

The advantage which he thus enjoyed can only be duly appreciated when we reflect on the close intimacies and personal friendship which had

been formed between English and foreign statesmen during the last four years of the war. England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia had fought in a common cause—had struggled together, had suffered together, and had triumphed together. The knot of kings and statesmen who assembled at Vienna in the memorable autumn of 1814 were like brothers in arms. With Francis, and Alexander, and Frederick William, with Metternich, and Talleyrand, and Hardenberg, Lord Castlereagh was an object of special attention and respect. He was the only perfectly independent man among them. England wanted nothing from the Powers, while the Powers wanted much from England. He was able to return from that Congress sensible only of the courtesy and the honour which had been shown to him, and unimbittered by any kind of disappointment in regard to the interests of Great Britain. All, as far as he was concerned, had gone amicably. It is not all at once that men of Lord Castlereagh's temperament can bring themselves to forget ties of this nature. It is on record that he deeply grieved over the rupture which he had failed to avert; and he would probably never have been

able to take the same tone, or act with the same decision, as Mr Canning, in dealing with his former friends.

Here, then, we see the true advantage that was gained by Mr Canning's accession to office. He came to it unfettered by previous ties, uninfluenced by social reminiscences, free to take his own course without violating any sentiment of either fidelity or affection. The results of this change were not immediate, but they were immense. What had previously been whispered in a deprecatory and reluctant spirit was now asserted boldly and confidently. What had previously been known only to diplomatic circles now became known to all the nations of Europe, namely, that in any struggle with their respective governments England would not only remain neutral but exert her whole moral influence to make others remain neutral too. There cannot be a question but that the disclosure of this truth imparted a stimulus to the revolutionary party all over Europe, which Mr Canning very probably regretted. But the remedy in his eyes lay not in intervention from abroad, but in the establishment of better govern-

ment at home. If no attempt of this kind was to be made, things must take their course. And things did take their course. That course led to the fall of ancient dynasties, the dismemberment of great empires, to determined and bloody insurrections. Its ultimate goal is not even yet reached. But Mr Canning had warned Europe, and had saved England,—that is to say, he had taken the first step towards disentangling her from the skein of continental politics with which the Revolution had entwined her. From his time, though our foreign policy may have been mistaken, or impotent, or undignified, it has become better and better understood that we are never to be asked to embroil ourselves in the internal affairs of other countries—not even when other countries violate this principle themselves. This principle is not yet established beyond the possibility of violation, as we shall afterwards have occasion to point out; but it gains ground every day. And we have sufficient faith in the good sense of the English people to make no doubt of the result. This principle, then, was planted by Castlereagh; but it was Canning who watered it, and digged a fence round it, protected

its infancy from the storm, and its fruitage from the wild-boar, and handed it down to his successors adult, vigorous, and healthy.

But we must remember at the same time that there is another kind of intervention, which was known to Europe long before the French Revolution, and still remains one of the unsettled questions of diplomacy,—that is, intervention to secure the independence of smaller states against the lawless ambition of their more powerful neighbours. Of the justice and wisdom of this kind of intervention, Mr Canning never had a doubt. Indeed, it was the accepted doctrine of all European jurists. Canning himself acted on the doctrine, and sent an English fleet to the Tagus when the independence of Portugal was threatened by the attitude of Spain. Canning assuredly would have approved of the Crimean war, and with equal certainty would, four years ago, have despatched a British force to the Baltic. These, then, were the two essential principles of our foreign policy when it passed out of the hands of Mr Canning: strict neutrality in the internal disputes of other kingdoms; prompt intervention in behalf of national independence.

The former principle, though not observed with perfect strictness, is in the ascendant, and may be looked to as the principle of the future. The latter has recently received some rude shocks, and it is difficult to predict its fate.

In the month of April 1827, Mr Canning became Prime Minister ; but he died in the following August, worn out by Parliamentary anxieties, and the ill treatment he experienced from a party whom he alone could have saved from the destruction that was now coming upon them. Mr Canning was throughout his life the consistent opponent of Parliamentary Reform. But then he had been the equally consistent advocate of all those measures for the sake of which alone Parliamentary Reform was wanted. He was the last of the Tories—of the true Tories—the men, that is, who combined monarchical principles of government with a liberal system of legislation, and would have averted constitutional changes by anticipating popular demands.

LORD PALMERSTON.

It is commonly said that Lord Palmerston was the Foreign Minister upon whom descended the mantle of Mr Canning ; but the justice of this observation is more than questionable. The truth is, that the farther we found ourselves from the end of the revolutionary war, the broader grew the difference between our past and present relations with the great monarchies of the Continent. The perception of this truth was not confined to any one English statesman. It had dawned upon Lord Castlereagh before the blood of Waterloo was dry. A few years more, and as the chasm grew wider and wider, it was more distinctly visible to Mr Canning. It was not concealed from the Duke of Wellington, though he did not reason from it as others did who knew England better than his Grace. And lastly, by the time Lord Palmerston had climbed into the seat of Foreign Minister, this truth was high in the

heavens ; one that no mortal could deny, however it might prompt him to act. This truth was, that whereas the great monarchies had been from 1793 to 1815 the protectors of liberty, between 1815 and 1830 they had gradually grown to be its enemies. In their contest with Napoleon, they represented the independence of Europe ; in the intestine struggles which succeeded, they represented only the principle of absolutism. At the cost of much bloodshed they had secured national freedom ; but they were prepared to shed as much more in the repression of popular government. English statesmen comprehended this change in very unequal degrees. Of Lord Palmerston it may be said that he was in this, as in all other questions, exactly abreast of his age, neither before it nor behind it ; and that he would probably have been much what he was, had Mr Canning never existed. More than that, events occurred after Mr Canning's death which gave a new character to the policy generally ascribed to him, and forced the Foreign Ministers of the day to carry it to greater lengths than Mr Canning himself would have admired. The reform agitation in England from 1830 to

1832, coincident with the revolutions which were everywhere breaking out in Europe, caused the Whig party in this country to be generally identified with the popular party on the Continent. The Whigs themselves could hardly help accepting this position, and making use of it to strengthen themselves at home ; and this of course gave a stimulus to our anti-absolutist foreign policy, which in the hands of Lord Palmerston began now to perplex the monarchs.

Lord Palmerston was born in 1784, and was descended from Sir William Temple, the secretary of Sir Philip Sidney. He was of an old county family, long seated at Temple in Leicestershire, and afterwards at Stowe in Buckinghamshire. Among his collateral ancestors was the Sir William Temple of Charles the Second's time, who formed the Triple Alliance. And Lord Cobham, Pope's "brave Cobham," was of the same stock. An Irish peerage was conferred on his grandfather in 1722, whose father in turn had been Attorney-General for Ireland. The late Minister was educated at Harrow, Cambridge, and at Edinburgh, and it has been subsequently remarked of him by his contempo-

raries, that he was a much more diligent student than those would have been inclined to suppose who knew him only as the Cupid of the Regency, or the light comedian of the House of Commons. He was a Lord of the Admiralty under the Duke of Portland in 1807, and was made Secretary at War by Mr Percival in 1809, when he was but five and twenty years of age, a post which he continued to occupy for no less than nineteen years, and under five successive Prime Ministers. It is a singular thing that a statesman who, in his seventy-first year, became not only Prime Minister of England, but developed in that office not a little of the vigour and the genius of Lord Chatham, owning but one rival in Europe for the foremost position of the time, should at the ripe age of forty-six have been known only as the efficient head of a department, and a sensible and agreeable speaker. Yet so it was. Lord Palmerston, when on the further side of middle age, began only to build up a reputation which most men have by that time either achieved or else despair of achieving. When he first received the seals of the Foreign Office, at the hands of Lord Grey, he had lived as long as the whole life of Mr Pitt, and was

older than the Duke of Wellington when he won the battle of Waterloo. When he first entered on the duties of First Lord of the Treasury he was older than any other Minister has been on resigning them. Is the brilliant and powerful old age, which is now one of England's memories, in any way connected with the comparative obscurity of his youth? We believe it is. During the first twenty years of his official life Lord Palmerston, though a perfectly efficient Minister, was never wrapped up in politics. He was learning the world. Unmarried, handsome, clever, spirited, and a Minister of State, his social advantages were unrivalled. While he was receiving one kind of education in the House of Commons, he was receiving another one at Almacks'. Few statesmen in our annals have had the advantage of this double education so thoroughly as Lord Palmerston. Walpole, perhaps, had the chance; but his was not the nature to profit by it. Pitt was overwhelmed with business almost from his coming of age, and hardly saw the world at all. Fox was caressed by women, but he was not disciplined by work. Peel married young and was a responsible Minister, in very troubled

times, at thirty-two. Mr Canning did the same. But Lord Palmerston's office, though while the war lasted it was a strain upon his energies, was not one of the responsible posts of Government, and he troubled himself very little about policy. When his official work was done he had leisure to enjoy himself, and to make the most of what society could do for him. What it could do was enormous. And in that easy mastery over men, that striking superiority which, while many resented, no one found it possible to quell, that perfect self-possession, and that power of making even real eloquence look ridiculous by adroit appeals from it to the tone of the club and the drawing-room, we saw the social fruits of twenty years supposed to have been dedicated to frivolity.

Lord Palmerston's foreign policy has been described as meddlesome and irritating ; and an estimate, which has been so generally adopted, and has been endorsed by statesmen of such experience, moderation, and ability, as the late Sir Robert Peel, can hardly be without foundation. Yet we sincerely believe that Lord Palmerston has been much misrepresented. One frequently hears it said that we

are passing through a period of transition. Would it not be truer to say that we are emerging from a period of transition? Did not this period begin soon after the Peace, and expire with the conclusion of the Crimean war? From the Revolution of 1688 to the formation of the Holy Alliance in 1820, England on the whole had adhered to the same *principles* of foreign policy. We were to consider ourselves an integral part of the European system, and to believe that nothing of importance could occur between the Tagus and the Vistula without the shock of it being felt here. As down to the era of the French Revolution there was no question of self-government in any quarter of the globe to trouble the minds of statesmen, our relations with existing powers were uncomplicated by any hostile sympathies between their subjects and the British people. During the continuance of the great war these complications were suspended, because the struggle for liberty on the part of the European nations was inevitably bound up with loyalty to their ancient dynasties. But after the overthrow of Napoleon, when men began to discover that it was now possible to adopt the prin-

ciple of liberty without the sacrifice of independence, a new epoch in European politics arose, through which we have passed to the theories of the present day. This was the period of transition. We did not abandon the old theory that England was a part of Europe ; and indeed there was no greater champion of this theory than Lord Palmerston himself to the day of his death ; but circumstances inclined us to give our sympathies to the popular movement, and lost us the confidence of our old hereditary friends. Then, again, as experience gradually taught us that our sympathy was held of little worth unless we lent substantial aid, the conviction began to take root that the less we mixed ourselves up with Continental affairs the better. The cosy family party of the eighteenth century was dispersed for ever. The new claims of nationalities and constitutions, and so forth, had been found very difficult to handle without exposing ourselves to dangers which the country was not willing to encounter. The Crimean war, by which nothing was gained except glory, came gradually to clinch this view. As long as Lord Palmerston lived he kept alive the old faith. But it is not the faith of Lord Stanley. It is not

a necessity of the party which he had joined, he had no alternative but to support the Liberal party all over Europe, or to resign his office. Besides, there will be always this much to be said in favour of Lord Palmerston, that his activity was not that of a mere pragmatist politician of the Russell stamp, but that he always had at heart what he called "English interests." It is also to be observed, whether in his praise or dispraise, that he carefully kept aloof from all cosmopolitan views, invariably basing his policy upon what appeared to be prudent and advantageous at the moment, and repudiating as impracticable all abstract principles of action. He always drew a distinction between rights and obligations; contending that there were treaties which gave us the right to interfere if we chose, without laying us under the obligation of interfering if we did not choose. As might be expected in the case of any statesman who avowedly took expediency for his guide, we find his policy at one time hard to reconcile with his policy at another. Yet the inconsistency after all is perhaps more apparent than real. As long ago as 1823, when a French army entered Spain to suppress a revolutionary movement, Lord Palmerston spoke strongly of the absurdity of using threats if not

prepared to go to war ; and in 1829 he spoke with equal warmth of the impropriety of making a great show of sympathy in a cause for which we did not mean to fight. Acting upon this principle, Lord Palmerston generally confined both his menaces and his promises to those cases in which, if war should ultimately become necessary, it seemed likely to be successful. This procured for him the imputation of bullying the weak and truckling to the strong. And it must be admitted that he did lay himself open to charges of this nature. But our excuse for him is that he lived in a transitional epoch, and while inheriting the traditions of the old fighting and aristocratical period, had to adapt himself to the spirit of a peace-loving and commercial one. This fact, moreover, will explain to us how it was that Lord Palmerston used to be accused of constantly involving this country in petty hostilities. As a matter of fact this was true. A fleet under Sir Charles Napier was sent to the assistance of Don Pedro in 1833, which engaged with and defeated the squadron of the rival faction. An English legion was enlisted with the approbation of ministers for the service of the Queen of Spain against Don Carlos. The Syrian war of 180 was a little war.

The Greek quarrel of 1850 tended in the same direction. And all three of these armed interventions partook of the character of interference in a civil war. In Poland, Italy, and Hungary, Lord Palmerston declined to interfere. Yet it was quite open to him to defend his policy, as he did by the "English interests" doctrine. He held these to be at stake in each of the three first-mentioned contests, and not in the three last. That he did not shrink even from a big war when he considered that he had the same reason for it, is proved by the Russian war of 1854, by his demeanour towards America in the Trent case, and by his own personal feeling in favour of assisting Denmark in her struggle with Austria and Prussia.

The difference between Lord Palmerston's foreign policy and that which is now coming into vogue consists rather in the different construction that we are henceforth likely to place upon our so-called "English interests" than in the repudiation of that doctrine altogether. Lord Palmerston held that English interests were involved in the balance of power. He considered, rightly or wrongly, that Spain and Portugal under the Miguelite and Carlist sceptres would always be hostile to Great Britain,

and thus derange the balance of influence, if not the balance of actual territory. If Belgium was to be severed from Holland, a prince must be seated on her throne who would not make her a province of France. It was essential to the position of England that neither Russia nor France should become mistress of the Mediterranean. English interests he likewise thought involved in keeping the northern sea-board of Germany out of the hands of the military powers. But the doctrine of the balance of power is on the verge of the grave ; and when it dies the creed of Lord Palmerston will die with it. English interests is a phrase which we are now beginning to construe in a narrower and more literal sense than we did formerly. Our recent controversy with Spain is exactly a case in point. Our quarrel with Brazil some few years ago was another. The Trent affair was a third. It is to cases of this kind, cases of actual offence, that the new school of diplomacy would limit the term English interests. If we ever go to war again for the independence of a weak state, Denmark will be justified in despising us as long as she remembers Duppel. But we have no expectation that we shall ever engage in such a contest. If we aban-

doned the old principle while Lord Palmerston was alive, there is little chance of its being revived now that his voice is silent.

Lord Palmerston was Foreign Minister, with a short interval in the winter of 1834-5, from December 1831 to the summer of 1841. And again from 1846 to 1851, when he quarrelled with Lord Russell about a despatch, and was dismissed from his post. He revenged himself directly afterwards by turning out Lord Russell on a Militia Bill—no very magnanimous action, by the by; and after the interlude of Lord Derby he took the Home Office under Lord Aberdeen. At the fall of the coalition he was elevated to the post of Prime Minister, which he held till 1858, when he gave way to Lord Derby's second administration. In 1859 he returned to office, and died as he had desired to die, Prime Minister of England, on the 18th of October 1865, in the eighty-first year of his age. He was a great man and a great Minister, but his part in the world was played. He would have lived only to encumber our political system. He died in harness; but it would be useless flattery to pretend that he died too soon.

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AND LORD ABERDEEN.

WE class these two statesmen together, because from different points of view they both represent the same doctrine,—the doctrine of absolute, as distinct from that of conditional non-intervention. Lord Castlereagh, Mr Canning, and Lord Palmerston represent one view of Foreign Affairs, and each took up the thread as the other dropped it. But all the time, and alongside of this school, there existed another which, though kept down by the brilliancy of Canning, reasserted itself against Lord Palmerston, and commenced that persistent opposition to his policy which culminated in the famous Greek debate of 1850.

It was a mere accident that the Canning-Palmerstonian policy came to be identified with the cause of Liberalism, or rather, perhaps, it was due to the policy of one to whom only tardy justice has been done, the first statesman on our list, Lord Castle-

reagh. He it was who, by repudiating the Holy Alliance, first loosened that connexion between England and the Monarchical and Legitimist Party on the Continent, which the French Revolution had made stronger and closer than ever. The coldness which thus sprung up became perceptible in every court in Europe. So that when civil war broke out, Lord Palmerston found the "English interest" doctrine leading him everywhere to the side of the insurgents. The extent to which this idea of "English interests" prevailed with him we have seen already.* This was predominant over every other consideration. And had English interests seemed wrapped up in the cause of absolutism, he would have embraced that side as readily as the other. Now the Aberdeen policy was directly opposed to this system. English interests, said that school, lie in keeping quite aloof from the internal affairs of other states. To interfere on behalf of one side is just as great a mistake as to interfere on behalf of the other. In proclaiming and acting upon this view, the party was of course

* His despatches in 1848 and 1849 are sufficient to justify this assertion.—*State Policy Mod. Eur.*, vol. ii., p. 308.

exposing itself to obvious misrepresentation. Because they would not aid rebellion they were declared to be the friends of tyranny ; it being quite overlooked that because they did not aid tyranny, they might just as well have been called the friends of rebellion. Their policy was perhaps a selfish one ; but it was most assuredly an impartial one. They simply held, that what was sauce for the prince was sauce for the people. And after an eclipse of some twenty years, it seems beyond a doubt that this doctrine is likely to reappear and become the accepted doctrine of the future.

The Duke of Wellington was born in 1769, and had just completed his forty-sixth year before the battle of Waterloo. For another four years he was with the army of occupation in France. He was fifty, therefore, before he settled down to his duties as an English Minister, and out of these fifty years nearly thirty had been passed abroad, and had been passed at the head of an army. He had thus on the one hand contracted certain military prejudices and been deprived of opportunities of studying the progress of opinion in his own country, while on the other, he had acquired an intimate knowledge

of the kings and ministers, the armies and the generals of Europe. The result was that, although his convictions were decidedly anti-popular, his foreign experience had not left him in love with the absolute monarchies of the Continent. He saw in the liberal movement throughout Europe, both at home and abroad, a general uprising against lawful authority, which was hateful to him both as soldier and aristocrat. But he knew how little reliance was to be placed on the friendship of the great Powers, unless, at least, England was prepared to go to lengths which even the Duke would have allowed to be impossible; so that he came round by another road to the same conclusion as Lord Aberdeen, and adopted the view, that absolute non-intervention was the only safe policy for this country.

The Duke of Wellington became Master-General of the Ordnance, with a seat in the Cabinet, on the 1st of January 1819. And in the course of the next three years he laid a foundation of unpopularity which lasted him till he retired from politics. He took a leading part against Queen Caroline. He opposed Roman Catholic Emancipation. He

spoke strongly on the subject of sedition. He was supposed to share in the imaginary sympathies of Lord Castlereagh with the Holy Alliance and the cause of despotism. But as far as foreign politics were concerned he deserved this odium just as little as Lord Castlereagh. On various occasions, and especially at the congress of Verona in 1822, they both protested against the policy of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, and denounced the practice of intervention in the strongest terms. And Lord Aberdeen's refusal in 1829 to interfere in the affairs of Portugal, and his and the Duke's objections to the Quadruple Alliance in 1834, were founded on just the same principle. In 1826 he was called upon to carry out Mr Canning's policy of intervention against Don Miguel; and he performed his part in the affair with all the skill and energy that might have been expected from him. But then there was of course this broad distinction between the Canning intervention of 1826, and the Palmerstonian intervention of 1833,—that in the prior case England supposed herself to be merely prohibiting the *invasion* of Portugal by a Miguelite corps which had been allowed to organise itself in Spain, while, in

the second case, she was giving active assistance to one of two parties in a civil war, when no such provocation had been given. As Canning had refused to let a hostile force equip itself in Spain for the service of Don Miguel, so did the Duke, when Prime Minister, refuse to let a hostile force equip itself in England for the service of Donna Maria, the rival claimant of the throne. A number of Portuguese refugees, who had assembled at Plymouth with a view of passing over to the island of Terceira, where the Queen's party still maintained itself, were ordered off, and were furthermore prevented by an English frigate from landing at Terceira. Against these proceedings Lord Palmerston uttered a vehement protest. But he should have seen that in principle it in no respect differed from the intervention of 1826. If Portuguese deserters and refugees were not allowed by England to make Spain a base of operations against Portugal, *a fortiori* they could hardly be allowed to use England herself for that purpose.

As long as Lord Liverpool remained Prime Minister the Duke of Wellington agreed very well with Mr Canning; but when, in the spring of 1827,

this statesman became himself Prime Minister, the Duke, who had in the beginning of the year been promoted to the Horse Guards, threw up his seat in the Cabinet, and the command of the army at the same time, and lent himself to the evil policy of that faction which "worried Mr Canning to death." It is the only stain on the Duke's long career. But Providence decreed that the malice of Mr Canning's enemies should be brought to a speedy termination. He died in the month of August 1827; and under his successor, an avowed Whig, the Duke returned to the Horse Guards. But the Goderich ministry was a mere stop-gap. It fell to pieces before Parliament re-assembled, and in January 1828 the Duke of Wellington was made Prime Minister of England.

The Tory party was triumphant and jubilant. It was generally believed that the death of Mr Canning had given a new lease of power to the party which distrusted him, and which never worked unanimously with him. There was never a more fatal blunder. Events proved that Mr Canning, and Mr Canning alone, could have kept the government of the country in the hands of the patrician

order. But for a brief space the Duke of Wellington was believed by the politicians of Pall Mall to be in for his life, and people began to settle themselves down again, after the last eighteen months, for another long and comfortable stage of Tory Government. It is from this period that we date the confluence of Aberdeen and Wellington, and their joint action ever afterwards against the aggravated form of Canningism which was presently adopted by Lord Palmerston.

Lord Aberdeen, who in his younger days had been largely occupied in diplomacy, and had mingled on terms of equality with the statesmen of the Napoleon epoch, was born in the same year as Lord Palmerston, (1784,) but in 1814 he had retired from public life, and for fourteen years remained devoted to agriculture and literature. When the Duke's rupture with Mr Huskisson led to the secession of those Canningites who had consented to serve under him, Lord Aberdeen accepted the Foreign Office, where he soon showed a policy of his own, and one doubtless more agreeable to his chief than that of his predecessor, Lord Dudley. The prompt recognition of Louis Philippe by the

Wellington and Aberdeen Cabinet is a proof that its policy rested on a principle, and was not determined by the character of the governments which they either supported or discountenanced. The Tory Wellington acknowledged Liberal principles in France as the Liberal Palmerston supported Tory principles in Austria, (1848,) the former on the fixed principle of non-intervention, the latter on the fixed principle of "English interests." To the above principle Lord Aberdeen remained firm through life; but the Duke of Wellington, who had protested so warmly against the intervention of England in the affairs of Portugal in 1833, and against the Austrian alliance in 1834, seems to have wavered in 1847, of which the explanation perhaps is, that on the last mentioned occasion he was thirteen years older; that he had, in a manner, retired from politics, and had exchanged his former position as leader of a party for that of the "Queen's Friend," who would support, as far as he could, whomever she might call to her councils. Under these circumstances, he may have succeeded in persuading himself that our intervention in the Portuguese civil war of 1847 was justifiable on extraordinary

grounds. But we have been unable to discover any circumstances in the rebellion of that date which would not equally have justified our policy in 1833.

It is to be observed, likewise, that in the great debate of 1850, upon our quarrel with the Government of Greece, the Duke of Wellington neither voted nor spoke, though he must at heart have agreed with Lord Stanley, who moved a censure upon Ministers. Lord Aberdeen spoke warmly in support of the motion, and did not fail to contrast the foreign relations of England in 1850 with what they had been when he himself left office in 1846. France, Austria, and Russia, to say nothing of Spain, Naples, and Prussia, each and all had their source of quarrel with us. And all was attributed to the meddlesome policy of Lord Palmerston. We have, however, pointed out before that it was Lord Palmerston's fortune, both in 1831 and in 1846, to take office at a moment when revolutions were either raging or about to rage on the Continent of Europe. That years so full of trouble as from 1830 to 1834, and again from 1847 to 1850, were more likely to get our Foreign Office into difficulties than the peaceful period of Sir Robert Peel's ad-

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ministration, must be admitted on all hands; and that is Lord Palmerston's excuse. Lord Stanley's motion was carried in the House of Lords by a majority of seventeen; while a contrary motion was affirmed in the House of Commons by a majority of forty-six. But it may be safely said that the great debate of June 1850 gave a shock to that system of policy which Lord Palmerston was supposed to embody, from which it never afterwards recovered. In 1853 Lord Aberdeen was chosen Prime Minister, and Lord Palmerston was not permitted to return to the Foreign Office. But the Duke of Wellington was now dead; and it will always be open to the student of history to believe that it was owing to the loss of that more masculine element which the old soldier contributed to it, that the pacific and neutral doctrine came to such grief as it did in the Crimean war.

After the death of Sir Robert Peel in 1850 Lord Aberdeen was recognised as the chief of that small band of politicians who still affected to be something wiser and better than either Whigs, Radicals, or Conservatives,—we mean the Peelites, who at this time were all head and no body; in other words,

all leaders and no party. After the collapse of the Whigs in 1852, both began to see that it was for the interest of both that some amalgamation should be made. So the Whigs found men, and the Peelites found officers, and the coalition was formed which overthrew the Government of Lord Derby. At the head of this combination was Lord Aberdeen, whose foreign policy was now submitted to a test under which it is supposed to have broken down, but which we have always thought proved rather the weakness of the man than the expediency of the principle. What would have been the results of leaving Turkey to her fate in 1854 it is now quite impossible to say. Ten years afterwards we abandoned Denmark to her fate, under circumstances that were precisely analogous ; and it is more than questionable whether we shall ever go to war again, however much pledged to it by treaties, for the sake merely of maintaining the balance of power on the Continent. This principle of absolute neutrality we believe to have been the principle of Lord Aberdeen, and his deviation from it in 1854 may of course be interpreted either as a condemnation of the man or a condemnation of the

policy. It is perhaps truest to say that the country was not then ripe for the adoption of this principle to its full extent, and in that case Lord Aberdeen will always remain to be blamed for not having taken up a more resolute attitude at first. Probably Lord Aberdeen was almost as much deceived in his estimate of public opinion as the Emperor of Russia in his estimate of the influence of Lord Aberdeen. Both apparently believed that England would not fight—the Minister because he thought the peace party entirely predominant, the Emperor because he fancied that the Minister could do what he liked. The result is well known. England was dragged into a war from which she emerged with some glory, but with no profit. She had shown, what nobody perhaps doubted, that English soldiers were what English soldiers always had been. But she left Turkey just where she was before. The Crimean war, in fact, was the demonstration of an old policy in an age which was inclining towards the new, and between the two stools England fell to the ground. We sustained our military reputation, but we did not equally sustain our diplomatic influence. Lord Aberdeen was in ad-

vance of his age, and his administration fell before a burst of popular indignation which hardly knew what it meant. This is what might have been expected to happen from the pouring of new wine into old bottles. Henceforth we shall know more clearly what our foreign policy means ; and it will be found to mean very much what Lord Aberdeen meant when he, like Burke, committed the fatal error of being wise too soon.

The more we reflect upon the events of the last forty years, the more clearly shall we see that the doctrine of complete non-intervention, though much advocated by Radicals, must naturally be a favourite with Conservatives. Since 1688 England has never had a Government that would have dared, even if it had wished, to aid kings in fighting with their subjects. Any active intervention, therefore, that it has been possible for England to exercise, has been in favour of the other side. Thus non-intervention, while in theory it applies to both parties, practically applies to only one. Non-intervention means simply non-intervention in favour of revolutionary movements, for nobody dreams of proposing intervention of any other kind. A Conser-

vative Government accordingly is far more capable than any other of carrying out the views of such a man, say, as the late Mr Cobden. And the general approval which has followed the foreign policy of Lord Stanley, whose principles are well known to be eminently in favour of neutrality, seems to show that in the Conservative Ministers of the day the popular intelligence recognises its true exponent.



SIR ROBERT PEEL.

WITH the conclusion of the great war in 1815 the Government of this country found itself face to face with vast arrears of social reforms, which had been accumulating for five and twenty years. Concurrently with this growth of, we will not say abuses, but of obstructions to the free play of the national institutions had likewise sprung up a dread of innovation for its own sake. This, of course, was the inevitable product of a long term of years, spent in a life and death struggle with a revolutionary power, which derived all its strength and all its terror from the success with which it had trampled upon ancient things. The statesmen who had worked the vessel from the first declaration of war to the final downfall of Napoleon, were not likely to throw off in a single night the frame of mind which had become a second nature. The elder part of the nation believed in them with the

faith of devotees. So that when peace was at length restored, and our House had again to be set in order, there was no one to undertake the task. The men of experience whom the nation trusted were generally averse to change. The men who were in favour of change were not men of experience ; were frequently enthusiasts ; and were often looked upon as "levellers." It is also worthy of observation that the peace of 1815 did not find the Government of England in the hands of gray-haired statesmen who, having played their part on the political stage, were shortly to resign it to other and younger men better fitted for the coming epoch. On the contrary, Lord Liverpool was only forty-five ; Lord Castlereagh was forty-six ; Mr Canning was forty-four ; and Mr Peel was only twenty-seven. Lord Sidmouth, indeed, and Lord Eldon were older men, but with these exceptions the Ministry and their chief supporters were men in the prime of life, with every chance of living many years, and of carrying on into another generation sentiments only suitable to a period which had now vanished. And so it proved. The Ministry lasted sixteen years ; and for three years after that the old Tory

party maintained their hold on office with a tenacity which sometimes makes us wonder how it was ever possible to beat them. Now the interesting question for us at the present moment is this, what was Peel learning from his first entry into public life in 1810, to the year 1827, when the death of Canning left him the first man in the House of Commons ; and when he first gave signs of that peculiar mental conformation which has become almost identified with his name ?

The late baronet was born in 1788, of a wealthy manufacturing family, whose forefathers had for generations held land as yeomen in the north of England. A baronetcy was conferred upon his father by Mr Pitt, although the first Sir Robert was by no means a staunch supporter of that Minister. The hope of the family was educated at Harrow and at Oxford, where he was always a good boy without degenerating into a prig. He boated, played cricket, and was very attentive to his dress. But he ended by taking a double first in 1808, at the same time when Whately took a double second. His father had marked him out for a political career, and used to say to him, "Bob, you dog, if you're not Prime Minister

I'll disinherit you." He was returned for Cashel, in Tipperary, in 1809, and was for some time private secretary to Lord Liverpool, the Colonial Minister of Mr Percival. After a time he became Under-Secretary for the Colonies ; and on the accession of Lord Liverpool to the Treasury was appointed Secretary for Ireland. He held this office six years ; and after an interval of three, during which he remained out of office, he became Secretary of State for the Home Department. This office he held till the break up of the Liverpool administration in 1827. What Peel was learning, then, during this long period of prosperity was that which alone properly deserves the name of Liberalism. That is to say, he was learning to see that there are two sides to every question. He was, unconsciously to himself perhaps, imbibing that true liberality of spirit which comes to a man from often finding out that his adversary was, after all, in the right. For Peel's mind was so formed that he could see and acknowledge when an adversary *was* right. Now the very strength and tenacity of the Tory party from 1811 to 1827 greatly favoured this educational process. For he saw that it was not from weakness, not from

unpopularity, not from want of administrative ability that the Tories threw away in a few years the ascendancy which they had enjoyed almost undisputed since 1783. He saw what can be done by a party which is thoroughly popular, which is led by statesmen full of vigour, and which abounds in men of long official experience and tried administrative capacity, if they will not understand the signs of the times, or condescend to read the lessons of history. He saw that reforms long withheld are like diseases long neglected, which though a strong man may feel no inconvenience from them for many years, will strike him down at last the more suddenly and violently. He saw that Roman Catholic Emancipation in 1801 or in 1812 might have prevented the Reform Bill in 1832. He saw that the seasonable enfranchisement of Leeds and Birmingham might have saved the disfranchisement of half the towns in Schedule A. He had learned, in fine, what the work was of which the post-Napoleonic era stood in need. And so with the great Reform fight of 1831, he cast his old skin altogether, and came out as the protector of existing institutions, but the reformer of all proved abuses. His support

of Municipal Reform, and his opposition to the Irish Church Bill, his Tamworth manifesto of 1834; but, above all, the Ecclesiastical Commission, which was the distinguishing feature of his first brief administration, sufficiently indicated the part which he intended to take. His financial policy from 1841-1845, and his repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, are all consistent with the new character he had assumed after the death of Mr Canning. And we believe that if Sir Robert had survived he would easily have reunited, under himself, the old Conservative party, have prevented the Crimean war, have settled long ago Parliamentary Reform, and have left to Lord Palmerston the reputation of only a second-rate statesman. We believe that he was in 1850 just what he was in 1832, a Conservative open to conviction, which is one good definition of a Liberal. He would have placed himself beyond the necessity of bending before obstructive prejudices, while incapable by nature of entertaining Radical sympathies. But dying prematurely as he did, he had accomplished a great task. He had tempered the first excesses of a reformed House of Commons; he had restored

the moral weight of Conservative principles ; he had led us through a period of transition full of difficulties and dangers, and had landed us on the verge of that new epoch which commenced with the fusion of the Whigs and Peelites into a Liberal Conservative party. A statesman with twenty years' official experience of the old *régime*, yet with mental pores still open, and intellectual elasticity still preserved, was the very man for the work. When statesmanship was more of a mystery than it is now, the new members from the north looked up with awe to one who had been a Minister under Perceval ; while his thoroughly business-like tone, his reasonableness, and his policy of improvement, made converts of city men to the "great Conservative cause," without weakening their attachment to what was really good in Liberalism. We dislike the cant of optimism ; and are unwilling to allow, as far as our limited faculties can discern, that whatever is, is best. Had Sir Robert Peel been alive in 1852, he would probably have taken office instead of Lord Derby. Had he been alive in 1853, he would certainly have taken office instead of Lord Aberdeen. In the first case

the Constitutional party would have been completely rehabilitated ; in the second place the British people would have been spared the bloodshed of Sebastopol. It is probable that Lord Derby, Mr Gladstone, and Mr Disraeli would all have taken office with him, and have thenceforth become friends instead of enemies in public life. We should have been spared many weak Governments, many lamentable schisms, and great political confusion, if Sir Robert Peel had completed the allotted term of three score years and ten.

However, Sir Robert Peel, we say, achieved a great task—the linking together, namely, of the old *régime* and the new ; and this accomplished, he was taken from us. Disputes are still rife as to his moral nature, nor have we been able to convince ourselves that the vindication in his posthumous memoirs of his conduct in 1829 and 1846 is adequate to meet the case. We entirely acquit Sir Robert Peel of having acted from dishonest motives, from mere love of place, that is, and patronage ; in the second case, indeed, he must have known that he would probably forfeit power for many years by the step he was about to take. But we do think this,

that he didn't in either case sufficiently consider whether it was not possible to achieve his purpose without dissolving his party, and that he adopted too recklessly the principle of justifying the means by the end. He was deficient in moral strength. When he resolved to change, he was impatient to have it over as quickly as possible. He could not wait, discuss, conciliate, and gradually inoculate his followers. He was afraid of the delay, and all the antecedent trouble, like a man rushing into the gazette when a little patience and endurance could have re-established his solvency. In politics he was essentially nervous; and nervousness in that, as in other things, inspires a man with false courage, which is really the truest cowardice. Neither the Romish disabilities nor the Corn Laws need have been repealed in so violent a hurry; and if Peel had little prospect of winning over the Protestant party, he had, we sincerely believe, a much better chance with the Protectionists. The worst of it was, too, that in each case he had been the chosen leader and champion of the party against which he turned, When he was elected for the University of Oxford in 1817, it was well understood in all quarters that

he took his seat as leader of the Anti-Roman Catholics in the House of Commons. But that was not all. On the other side were arraigned such men as Canning, Castlereagh, and Plunket, Parliamentary knights, compared with whom Mr Peel was an esquire. Reckoned merely as one of their followers, however able or judicious, he could never have filled that space in the public eye which fell to him at once as the head of the great Protestant interest. This position brought him to the front at once; and gave him a *status* of his *own*, which placed him on a level with all the leading statesmen of the House. Now, we do not blame him in that, having accepted this position, he afterwards changed his mind, and felt himself obliged to abandon it. But what we do say is, that a leader of a great political party is bound to give his followers notice when his opinions have begun to change, and not to make use of that unsuspecting security which their confidence in himself has begotten to rob them of all they hold dear. In the case of the Corn Laws, it is hardly too much to say that Sir Robert Peel actually boasted of having done this. In the matter of Catholic emancipation his conduct was less culpable

in this respect ; but from another point of view it was still worse. His change of mind on the subject of Protection was, we fancy, very sudden, and there might *not* have been time to communicate more fully with his party. Such is not our own view, but we cannot say there is nothing in it. But in regard to emancipation, his purpose had begun to waver actually four years before the measure was announced. Yet all this time he allowed his followers to believe that he was as staunch to their cause as ever. Again, to the *principles* of free trade, Sir Robert had become a sincere convert ; he was *sure* that Protection was a fallacy, and that to explode it was a public service. But on the Roman Catholic question his opinions had *not* changed. He repeatedly tells us this himself. His estimate of the mischief that would ensue from the total repeal of the Disabilities was as high as ever ; but he thought they could no longer be maintained without an insurrection. Now, surely, here was an additional reason for dealing tenderly and considerately with his followers. He still shared their convictions ; he still sympathised with their feelings. Under these circumstances, how could it have been reconcilable

with his duty not to take open counsel with them when he doubted the possibility of sustaining those convictions any longer? Humanity is frail. The greatest men are not perfect ; and we fear it is quite impossible to doubt, with his own vindication before us, that Peel's silence on the subject after 1825, when he confided to Lord Liverpool the doubts which had arisen in his mind was, partially at all events, due to jealousy of Mr Canning. Peel knew that if he once abandoned his pedestal as leader of the Protestant party, he could only play a second to Mr Canning ; and this he could not stoop to do. It is very likely that even the Duke of Wellington was not altogether above such considerations. But Peel, we know, kept his doubts to himself till after Mr Canning was dead, and then, and not till then, allowed them gradually to become known.

Thus, we cannot rank the moral nature of Sir Robert Peel so highly as we rank his intellectual. But we believe that, in spite of the shortcomings we have herein indicated, the injuries which he is alleged to have inflicted upon the system of political parties have been grossly exaggerated. He certainly made more than amends in 1834 for what he

did in 1829 ; and we believe that had he lived he would have made amends in 1853 for what he did in 1846. He it was who reconstructed out of the old Tory party that new Conservative party which, in spite of some rude shocks, still lives and flourishes, and is at this moment regulating the government of the country. It has often been said that the party of Sir Robert Peel was a party without a principle, and exclusively founded on expediency. Now this is hardly fair. Sir Robert Peel in 1833 recognised the truth that henceforth in England a purely *stationary* party was impossible. A series of reforms was inevitable. To whom, then, was it for the public good that the carriage of these measures should be committed ?—to hands that were friendly or to hands that were supposed to be unfriendly to the constitution ? That was the burden of his song for ever ; and the Duke of Wellington heartily concurred with it. Now, to say that a party constructed with this idea before it is a party without a principle, is unfair. It is true in the letter, but false in the spirit. Sir Robert accustomed the country to that progress of practical improvement under the guidance of a presiding Conservative

principle which had hitherto been deemed impossible. He took the work of reform out of Radical hands, and showed that he could do it better. He made the Conservative party the popular party. And it is greatly owing to the result of his labours that the people of England have learned to feel perfectly secure of the course of beneficial legislation in the hands of those whom they would formerly have denounced as bigoted aristocrats and oppressors. He sweated the Conservative party so to speak, got rid of its superfluous flesh, and led it to a famous victory. And his successors, who have been so lavishly abused, have only done the same thing.

It is remarkable that this celebrated man has always been popular; and from 1834, when the king summoned him from Rome to form a Cabinet, to 1850, when all England mourned his loss, he was the only rival of the Duke of Wellington for the place of first subject in the empire. As leader of opposition from 1836 to 1841; as Prime Minister from 1841 to 1846; and as an independent member from that date to his death, he was all along the man in whom both the court and the country had the

greatest confidence. His character as a statesman was not without numerous weaknesses. But his memory will live long as one of the greatest of that race of wise, temperate, and business-like Ministers who, like Walpole and Pitt, seemed specially adapted to the English genius.



LORD GREY.

FROM a list of statesmen who have left their mark upon the History of England since 1815, it was impossible to omit Lord Grey. At the same time, it is not our own opinion that he ranks among the first class. He was the one man in England who could carry a Reform Bill, and he carried it. But this pre-eminence was owing partly to circumstances, and partly to qualities which, though always admirable, and in this case singularly opportune, are nevertheless distinct from greatness. He was inflexibly honest; he was inspired by an honourable ambition, untainted by the greed of office; he was very firm, but his firmness was united with a cold temperament and a polished manner, which never allowed it to become rudeness. We have the concurrent testimony of contemporaries to the fascination of his eloquence; and five and twenty years established beyond dispute his capacity for the

management of a party. Nevertheless, we cannot sincerely affirm that Lord Grey was a great statesman. If he had been, we should have had a very different Reform Bill in 1832, and should not have had to reconstruct our electoral system in 1867.

One explanation of this may be that, even down to the death of George the Fourth, the Whigs continued to despair of their own fortunes, and were really taken by surprise when they suddenly found themselves in office, and called on to produce a Reform Bill. *They were not ready.* But the people were too excited to wait, and the result was a measure which dissatisfied all parties alike. Lord Grey himself predicted to Lord Sidmouth, that within two years the Whigs would be taunted with having introduced an extremely aristocratic measure. And they certainly were taunted with having introduced a measure which was chiefly intended to protect their own interests. If the taunt were true, it is curious to observe how completely the design failed. Thirty-five years have now passed away, and Radicals we see, and Conservatives we see, but where are the Whigs? So far from having been able to hold their own as

they expected, in the capacity of moderators between the old Tories and the new Radicals, they have been nearly crushed between the two ; and a new party bearing the name of Constitutional Liberals has arisen, as it were, by natural selection, to do the work of which the Whigs have become incapable. Had Lord Grey possessed really commanding talent, and true political sagacity, this result would never have occurred. The dispirited Conservative minority, which took its seat on the Opposition benches in 1833, would have partially died out, partially have been absorbed into the Whig ranks, but would never have shot up again like the Phoenix, as it was allowed to do in a few years. The explanation of this is, that Lord Grey, though a sincere believer in the necessity of Reform, was no believer in his own Reform Bill. It was not what he had originally intended, and when it was carried he found himself like a fish out of water. During the two years of his administration his heart was never in the work. The Radicals and the Conservatives on seeing this plucked up their courage. The first drove him from office ; the second began to prepare themselves for a return to power. The Radicals were

not popular. A Conservative reaction really did ensue. The Whigs retrograded to a point far below that at which they stood during the last years of George the Fourth ; and, by the accession of Queen Victoria, had thrown away the whole stock of popularity which they had raised upon the credit of Reform.

In those days, it must be remembered, that " Whig " and " Liberal " meant two perfectly distinct things ; and that what we here say of the former is not meant to apply to the latter.

The second Lord Grey was born at Falloden, in Northumberland, on the 13th of March 1764. His father was General Sir Charles Grey, afterwards the first Earl Grey, a gentleman of ancient family, and unquestionable Norman origin. The future statesman was educated at Eton and at Cambridge, and entered the House of Commons in his twenty-third year, in July 1786. As a Whig he of course attached himself to the side of Mr Fox, and remained a faithful adherent of that statesman through every vicissitude of fortune. On his death, in 1806, Lord Howick, as he had then become, succeeded to the leadership of the Whig party, which sus-

tained an almost irreparable loss by his removal to the Upper House in Nov. 1807. For twenty-seven years, however, he still continued to preside over the fortunes of the party ; and it was his rare good luck, after so protracted a period of opposition, to lead them not to victory but to conquest. But during the whole of this precedent period there is comparatively little to take notice of. Lord Grey was known as the consistent advocate of Roman Catholic Emancipation, the abolition of the Slave Trade, and of that cautious application of the pruning-knife to corrupt or depopulated boroughs, which for a long time was all that represented "Reform." On the other hand, he adopted all those less politic views of his own party which contributed so greatly to strengthen and prolong Tory government. He opposed the French war, and spoke slightly of the genius of Wellington. He adopted the unpopular theory of the Regency which had been supported by Mr Fox in 1788. And in 1817 he opposed with all his might the measures which were passed through Parliament for the prevention of seditious meetings. This policy cost Lord Grey and the Whigs the alliance

of a party which, though not numerically strong, was rich in abilities and experience, and above all in Parliamentary influence. In 1817, Lord Grenville and his friends, who had been amalgamated with the old Whig party since the year 1805, repudiated the principles which it now professed in both Houses, and returned to their ancient allegiance. This defection was followed by the most important consequences. It communicated first that liberal tinge to the Tory party which was required to keep up its repute with educated and intellectual men, and it gave Lord Liverpool some twenty new votes in the House of Commons, which restored his majority to the standard of the old *régime*. At the same time it took away from the Whigs that moderate and more conservative element which had kept up their moral influence with the British middle classes, in whose ears the echoes of revolution and anarchy still lingered. The opposition which led to this schism was an error on Lord Grey's part, without doubt; for it is questionable how far even the Whigs themselves believed Government to be wrong. At all events, Lord Brougham, speaking of this period in after years, gave it as his

opinion that it was a very fortunate thing the Tories were in office to sustain the odium of doing what, as far as he could see, the Whigs, had they been in office, must have done too.

In 1827 Lord Grey declined to give his support to the ministry of Mr Canning, chiefly, we believe, because he entertained a rooted objection to coalitions, and to cabinets formed upon the principle of "open questions." But he paid a ready tribute to the patriotism of the Duke of Wellington in 1829; and in his speech upon the second reading of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, he passed a warm eulogium on the Duke's distinguished services both in the field and in the Senate. He little foresaw at this moment that in less than eighteen months the reign of Toryism would be over, the image of the Duke shattered, the Whigs, with himself at their head, in possession of the sacred citadel, and a political revolution begun of which we have not yet seen the end. Yet, had he been able to read the signs of the times, he surely might have suspected at least that great changes were at hand. The carriage of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill had demoralised the Tory army, though perhaps too

much has been attributed to this particular cause ; for the foolish and shortsighted vindictiveness of the malcontents would have had no opportunity of showing itself to any good purpose, but for other circumstances which ought not to have been wholly unexpected by a truly great statesman. George the Fourth was not likely to last much longer. His successor was a royal Liberal. The elements of revolution were everywhere at work upon the Continent. The policy of Prince Polignac did not promise well for the stability of the French Government. But Lord Grey was a little too much elevated above the common herd to notice these things, and so the signs of coming mischief perhaps escaped him. At all events, the death of George the Fourth in June, the dethronement of Charles the Tenth in July, and the general election in August, coming fast upon the heels of each other, produced a wonderful effect upon the relative strength of English parties. William the Fourth and Louis Philippe were the heralds of a new *régime*. The Whigs gained such strength from this idea that they tore sixty seats from their opponents, and the discontented Tories did the rest. In November 1830 Ministers were

beaten on the Civil List, the Duke of Wellington resigned office, and the malice of a few bigots brought an ancient constitution to the ground.

Notwithstanding the loss which Ministers had sustained at the general election, the two parties were only about evenly balanced in the new Parliament. But public excitement on the Reform question ran very high, and Lord Grey was unwilling to take office unless the king pledged himself to Reform, and empowered his Ministers to dissolve again should circumstances appear to require it. So far he was not to blame. But the necessity for immediate action was, we think, overrated. The popular party would have been satisfied for some time with seeing their own friends in power. That would have been a guarantee that Reform was no longer to be trifled with. A declaration from the throne would have pacified all reasonable men; and the delay of a year would have enabled the Whig Ministers to approach the subject with much fuller knowledge, and much clearer appreciation of the work to be done than they possessed in their first six months of office. On this point, then, we think Lord Grey was wrong. We

believe it was in his power in January 1831 to have held the question over for at least another twelve months, a gain of time that would have been invaluable. Such was the king's own wish, and it could only have been an exaggerated estimate of the popular enthusiasm, and an unphilosophical confusion of it with the political passions of the French, which led his Ministers in a contrary direction. But having once taken up this attitude, Lord Grey's after conduct was irreproachable. We have never thought that his measure was a good one ; and, as we have already stated, he did not even think so himself. But he felt that it was his duty to pass it ; and it was entirely owing to such a combination of tact, determination, and courage, as, but for recent events, would have been thought unique in Lord Grey, that the measure was passed. This, then, is Lord Grey's contribution to English history since the peace. If it was his fault that the bill was introduced too soon, it is to his credit that it was passed without an insurrection. Of the character of the change itself we shall say what we have to say when we come to the career of Earl Russell. It is sufficient to add in this place that the Reform Bill

finally became law in June 1832, and that the first reformed Parliament assembled in January 1833.

This was Lord Grey's great work—the Reform Bill of 1832. It would have been a greater work had it been more thoroughly considered. But as the leading spirit at a great crisis, which has changed the future history of England, Lord Grey will always stand out above the heads of all his contemporaries. There was moreover a peculiar fitness in Reform being conducted to a successful issue by Lord Grey. Exactly forty years before, when a young man of eight and twenty, he had been selected to present a petition in favour of Reform to Mr Pitt's House of Commons. In 1797 he had been entrusted by the Whig party with the preparation of a bill, which was introduced, debated, and lost on a division by 149 votes ; and when, after the lapse of nearly a quarter of a century, the question rose to the surface again, Lord Grey was still the statesman on whom Whig Reformers pinned their hopes. Well would it have been for all of us if he had been permitted to pass a measure of Reform ten years earlier than he did, when he would have been absolute master of the situation, and in a posi-

tion to crush those elements of mischief which unavoidably mixed themselves up with the measure of 1832.

Lord Grey's political career after the passage of the Reform Bill was brief indeed. He had called into being a House of Commons which, bent upon objects of its own, and a stranger to Parliamentary traditions, showed little reverence or obedience to the author of its political existence. Lord Grey might have exclaimed with Arthur: "I perish by this people whom I made." He succeeded in passing one great measure on which no doubt his heart was set, and then he fell. The abolition of slavery was the great work of the session of 1833; and then arose in foaming menace before the Whig ministers, as they have often and often risen since, the breakers of that treacherous sea which has wrecked so many stately vessels,—the difficulties of Ireland. A Coercion Bill had been passed in 1833. In 1834 Lord Grey was desirous of renewing it. An agitation promoted by O'Connell had entrapped the Irish executive into admissions unfavourable to that step. Lord Althorpe, the leader of the House of Commons, was involved

in them. And when Lord Grey decided to go on, Lord Althorpe sent in his resignation. Lord Grey accepted it, but at the same moment resigned himself, and quitted public life for ever. This was in the summer of 1834, just three years and a half after his acceptance of office, and in the seventy-first year of his age. He lived eleven years longer, and died on the 17th of July 1845; but he never mingled in politics again, and fell back in old age upon the pleasures which he had always loved—his woods, his garden, and his classics. He was an illustrious man, rather than a great one. In the later part of his political career, he followed instead of guiding circumstances. In no one special quality was he conspicuously eminent; but the combination of Parliamentary eloquence, patrician dignity, and popular sympathies, which was peculiar to the old *régime*, never had a completer embodiment than in Charles, Earl Grey.



LORD RUSSELL.

"I never saw a Whig, but I often wished I was one."—THACKERAY.

WE now come to the first upon our list of statesmen who is still among the living, and still continues to influence the world of politics. But from those whom we have already described, he is separated only by the grave. His political tone of mind belongs to the past generation ; and though he is ostensibly at the head of the party of progress, he is deficient in that mobility of intellect, and capability of receiving new impressions, which we naturally associate with Liberalism. But the most interesting point in the political career of Lord Russell is the fact that he is the only leading Whig statesman who in recent times has come out of the great Whig families. This is curious, because Whiggism in the public mind is associated with exclusiveness, and a desire to appropriate the highest offices of the Crown to a limited number of noble houses. It is true, indeed, that just after the

French Revolution the Whigs had fewer families to choose from. The Pelhams, the Mannerses, the Bentincks, and many another name of note, had gone over to Mr Pitt. But some, we must remember, came back after Mr Pitt's death, and more after Napoleon's subjugation. The Fitzwilliams, the Fitzroys, the Cavendishes, the Seymours, the Grosvenors, the Campbells, the Spencers, the Cowpers, were unable to produce a Prime Minister. Lord Althorpe may be considered an exception, but Lord Althorpe was never one of those ruling minds, or influential leaders, to which these essays are restricted. Lord Grey did not belong to the great Whig order, either by birth or by principles. His father, the first Earl, had been a simple baronet, and the family politics were Tory. The Grenvilles were not thorough-going Tories, but still less were they thorough-going Whigs; and even these did not belong to the charmed circle known as the Revolution Families. When, therefore, it began to be whispered about among the Houses that, after many years of dignified sterility, the Whigs had at length produced a stripling, who, sprung from the purest Whig blood, seemed capable of one day,

being a leader, great, we may be sure, was the rejoicing. It was impossible to make too much of him. He was, so to speak, the child of their old age—the Isaac of Whiggism; and he was carefully nurtured in all its Parliamentary traditions, and cautiously but steadily put forward as the legitimate successor of Lord Grey. To the powerful and undivided support of the whole Whig connexion which was thus secured to him, it is not unfair to attribute some part at least of that importance which Lord Russell has so long possessed. A bold and effective speaker, yet no orator; a sincere disciple of progress, yet without originality; a man of great and varied talents, yet deficient in tact and self-knowledge,—two qualities for the want of which in the House of Commons not even genius can atone,—it would have been impossible for Lord Russell, without the advantages aforesaid, either to win or to keep the place which he sustained in Parliament from the formation of Lord Melbourne's Ministry in 1835 to the dissolution of his own in 1866.

Lord Russell has filled a great variety of offices. He has been Paymaster of the Forces, Home Secre-

tary, Colonial Secretary, Foreign Secretary, President of the Council, and Prime Minister. It may have been this readiness for all kinds of work, as well as his proverbial pluck, that gave rise to the well-known joke, that if offered the command of the Channel Fleet, Lord Russell would unhesitatingly accept it. But be this as it may, his name will descend to posterity identified chiefly with two things, the representation of the people, and what may be styled, according to the taste and principles of the reader, either the reform, or the ruin of the Church of England. His exploits in the field of Foreign Policy will, we sincerely hope, be soon forgotten. In Finance he has attempted nothing, though Lord Melbourne, with characteristic pleasantry, contemplated making him Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the question of Parliamentary Reform he appropriated at an early age, and, unless we are much deceived, he is still regarded by a large part of the English clergy as the representative and champion of secularism.

He was born in 1792, and was educated at Westminster. From school he did not proceed to either University, but attended instead a course of

lectures at Edinburgh. In 1813 he was returned to Parliament for the family borough of Tavistock, and, as we have already stated, he shortly became known as a rising authority on the Reform Question. At this time, however, Lord Russell represented that class of reformers who desired to keep up a distinct line of demarcation between themselves and the Radicals. The old Whigs of the Bedford and Devonshire connexion, were as much opposed to Sir Francis Burdett and Mr Hobhouse as Lord Eldon or Lord Castlereagh could be. In July 1819, when Sir Francis Burdett introduced resolutions in favour of a sweeping Reform Bill, Lord John Russell opposed it as revolutionary ; and when in December of that year he introduced a proposition of his own, he limited it to the disfranchisement of boroughs proved guilty of corruption, and the transfer of their representatives to more important communities. Grampound was his solitary victim, and he proposed to disfranchise this notorious stronghold of bribery, in favour of the town of Leeds. The Government of the day did not oppose the motion, but the question fell through, chiefly in consequence of the king's death, and the public

excitement which followed on the subject of Queen Caroline. Returning prosperity caused the Reform Question to be shelved, and between 1824 and 1830 not a single petition in its favour was presented to the House of Commons. And it is remarkable that Lord Althorpe, when asked by Sir Robert Peel why in 1826 and 1827 he supported Mr Canning, who was resolutely opposed to a Reform Bill, replied, "The people of England had grown so indifferent to Reform, that he never intended to re-open the question again." Lord John Russell himself in 1819 had made what is known as his famous "Aladdin speech," from which our readers may judge for themselves what was the temperature of Whig liberalism before circumstances conspired to inflame it.


"Our lamp is covered with dust and rubbish, but it has a magical power. It has raised up a smiling land, not bestrode with overgrown palaces, but covered with modest dwellings, every one of which contains a freeman enjoying equal protection with the proudest in the land. It has called into life all the busy creations of commercial prosperity. Nor when men were wanted to defend and illustrate their country, have such men been deficient. When the fate of the nation depended on the line of policy she should adopt, there were orators of the highest degree placing in the strongest light the arguments for peace and war. When we decided upon war, we had heroes to gain us laurels in the field, and wield our thunders on the sea. When again we returned to peace,

the questions of internal policy, of education of the poor, of criminal law, found men ready to devote the most splendid abilities to the well-being of the community; and shall we change an instrument that has produced effects so wonderful for a burnished and tinsel toy of modern manufacture?"

However in 1826, when it was perhaps thought necessary to make some protest against the Canningisers, Lord John was again set on to urge the question, which he did on the 27th of April, contenting himself with a motion for inquiry into the state of the representation, and suggesting only what he should be inclined to recommend should a bill be actually brought in. This was to take one member away from the hundred most decayed boroughs, and distribute the vacant seats among the larger counties and towns. He could muster, however, but a hundred and twenty-three supporters, against two hundred and forty-seven of the Government, and it must have seemed very doubtful at that time, whether Parliamentary Reform would ever be political bread and cheese to him. He had now been thirteen years in Parliament, and was nearly thirty-five years of age. He had connected himself, as it appeared, with a failing cause. He had not made his mark as an orator. By the public at large he

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was held to be of no account. What was he to do to be saved and to justify the fond expectations of his political parents and guardians? When things seem at their worst, says the proverb, they are sure to mend. The formation of the Duke of Wellington's cabinet in 1828, which people generally thought would last the Duke's life, brought, as it happened, his long deferred chance to Lord John Russell. He moved and carried the repeal of the Test and Corporation Act, beating the Government on the first division by a majority of forty-four. This success raised his reputation considerably. Nevertheless, when Lord Grey came into office in 1830, Lord Russell received no higher appointment than that of Paymaster of the Forces. But his long addiction to the Reform question now insured him the distinction of being one of the four persons named to draw up the outline of a measure; and the Reform Bill of 1832, as it eventually passed, clearly owed one quarter of itself to the Paymaster of the Forces. To such of our readers as may desire to study in greater detail the history of the first Reform Bill, we would recommend the work of Sir William Molesworth upon that subject, and Mr



Roebuck's "History of the Whig Party," published in 1852. We shall not detain the reader now over all the vicissitudes of that great struggle, the successful termination of which was chiefly owing to Lord Grey. But the result of it was to make a man of Lord Russell. Lord Althorpe went to the Upper House. The ecclesiastical policy of the Ministry drove away Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham. Lord Palmerston was not a Whig *pur sang*, and had no pretensions, in an age of Reform, to lead the House of Commons over Lord John Russell's head. There was nobody else; and when Lord Melbourne succeeded Sir Robert Peel early in 1835, Lord John became his Home Secretary, with the leadership of the House of Commons. Henceforth he was practically the head of the Whig party, down to the present day; and if he owed his promotion in a great measure to the name of Russell, no doubt the moderate, yet persevering spirit in which he had so long pursued the subject of Reform, entitled him to a high reward when the game was at length run down.

We cannot undertake to follow in any detail the career of Lord Russell after he became the Whig

leader in the Lower House. But it has been a singularly chequered career. It will have been observed by reflecting students that history is consistent with herself; and thus it is a curious circumstance that the progress of the Whig party, from its foundation to the present day, has always betrayed its origin. What we mean is, that it has always played the part, more or less, of a *Deus ex machinâ*; it comes to the rescue upon great occasions: to change the dynasty, to reform the constitution, to beard the Pope; but the ordinary humdrum work of every-day legislation lies without its sphere. So we see that the Whig tenure of office generally follows a period of revolution, and lasts until the new state of things may be considered to be established, when it usually makes room for workmen better suited to the requirements of the age. When the Revolution dynasty was once fairly settled on the throne, the practical genius of Pitt superseded for a time the serene Olympic oligarchy, and busied itself with commercial treaties and other matters, to which gods of course could not condescend. The French war interrupted the natural course of

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events, and made statesmen acquainted with strange bedfellows. But from 1815 to 1830, when the natural division of parties was resumed, an immense amount of practical work was got through by the Tories, in proof of which we refer our readers to an excellent little treatise by Sir John Walsh, published in 1860, completely disproving the idea that a Reform Bill was required for the sake of more efficient or more economical government. Granting, however, that it *was* required for other reasons, it naturally became the property of the Whigs. The Tories would have passed a better bill had its only aim been to improve the existing constitution. But circumstances (those fatal sisters) demanded a revolution, and for *that* the Whig party was required. But the Reform Bill was a Revolution which left no Jacobites behind it. The Conservative party accepted it as a final settlement, and their sincerity was never called in question. What was the result? In the very second session of the Reformed Parliament, the Whig Government was out of office. A party hostile to the change, and bent, if possible, on reversing it, would have kept them in power as it kept in power Sunderland and Walpole. But no

such party was in existence; and when the Whigs had to fall back upon their legislative and administrative talents, they could do nothing. In this remarkable circumstance we see the key to much of what is peculiar in the career of Lord John Russell. Elevated repeatedly to the summit of affairs as the Whig leader, he has as often been compelled to descend from it as a Whig administrator. In fact, a Whig without a revolution is like a sailing ship without a breeze. He lies becalmed upon the water, a thing of beauty no doubt, but only capable of moving when taken in tow by the Liberal steam-tug. And such has been the fate of Lord John Russell. From 1835 to 1841 he was towed by O'Connell. From 1846 to 1852 he was towed by the Peelites. Almost everything that he has attempted to do of his own accord, he has done badly. In 1834 he "upset the coach," as the phrase ran, by unguardedly assuring Mr Sheil that he *was* prepared to go certain lengths in Irish Church Reform. This led to the secession of some of the ablest ministerialists, gave Sir Robert Peel a chance of dissolving Parliament, and so strengthened the Conservative party that Lord John was never able to redeem his pledge. The finances of the country,

during the time in which he led the House of Commons, fell into the grossest disorder. In 1850 he wrote his famous Durham letter, which ended in the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which has ended in nothing but contempt. The Crimean war was, not indirectly, owing to a blunder which he made at the Foreign Office about the treaty of Kainardji ; and we know what he did for English honour in the affairs of Poland and Denmark. He could not even mend his own Reform Bill, when a quiet practical piece of work was required from him, and his failures in 1852, 1854, 1861, and 1866, throw a very curious and instructive light upon his character. The country on these occasions did not want a revolution, and therefore did not want Whig workmanship. Lord Russell in fact has never done so little harm as when he was Prime Minister, and this fact corroborates our own view of him. As the representative of a great historic school of politics,—as the mouthpiece of great constitutional maxims,—he is not unworthy even of the Parliament of Great Britain ; but the further he is removed from actual work, to the greater advantage is he seen. He has been very popular in his time. He has gathered about him, as Mr

Cobden said, "much of the hope and confidence of the country." But he has for many years been placed in a false position. The place which he had won by the advocacy of great principles he was required to maintain by the exercise of practical abilities, and to this demand he has never been able to respond. It is undoubtedly for want of this practical turn of mind which we see so strongly in Sir Robert Peel, in Lord Palmerston, and in Lord Stanley, that Lord Russell's ministerial reputation is so conspicuously unequal to his high political position. When he comes to practical politics, he cannot get out of the groove where he was placed in 1832. We saw that in his abortive Reform Bills. We see it again still more signally in his pamphlet on the Irish Church. It is to be remarked finally of Lord Russell, that he has not done exactly that very thing which his position and connexions seemed eminently to fit him *to* do. He has not done for the Whig party what Sir Robert Peel and Mr Disraeli have together done for the Tory party. The business that he was marked out for was the gradual adaptation of Whiggism to the requirements of modern politics. He ought to

have made the new men of the new *régime* Whigs ; instead of allowing them to form a new party of their own. He was the man to have thrown Whig and Radical doctrine into the political crucible, and to have brought out a new coinage with the old stamp, adapted to the wants of the age. But for presiding over a process of fusion, for leading his party through the long defiles of a transition epoch, Lord John had not the talent, and in neglecting this function, he threw away all claims to be enrolled among our greatest parliamentary statesmen. But still Lord Russell has filled a great space in our political history. If he owed it partly to his birth, he must owe it also partly to himself. The necessities of the new Radical party, and the political poverty of the great Whig houses which relieved Lord Russell from all rivalry, combined to place him in situations to which his particular abilities were unequal, and the traditions of his party unsuited. But in spite of these disadvantages, he will leave a great name behind him ; for he has been intimately connected with one great event, and the fame of that will dwarf the smaller reminiscences of his less creditable proceedings.

LORD DERBY.*

THE high rank of Lord Derby, his illustrious lineage, his commanding abilities, and his brilliant accomplishments have enabled him to play in English politics a rare, perhaps unprecedented, part. He has not created a party in the sense in which Sir Robert Peel, Mr Pitt, and Lord Bolingbroke created parties ; he has established no new watchwords ; has enunciated no new principles ; has founded no school of politicians. This has been done by others upon the Conservative side, but not by the Earl of Derby. What is it then that he has done ? It is this : by the greatness of his position, and the lustre of his genius he sustained the moral life of his party when it seemed to be at the lowest ebb ; and lent a rallying-point to the broken forces of Conservatism which no eloquence, no philosophy could

* While these articles have been passing through the press, events have occurred which seemed almost to require that an appendix should be added to those on Lord Derby and Mr Disraeli. I regret to say that I have had no time to make any such additions to the volume, and that as it falleth, there it must lie.

have afforded. He stood like some stately castle on a solitary height, beneath the shelter of whose ramparts a routed army reconstructs itself. Under the shadow of his wing the party gradually grew up again, recovered its discipline and self-confidence, became once more fit for war, and equal to victorious campaigns.

The moral effect of a leader who was allowed to be, take him all in all, the greatest "swell" in this age, was immense. Each of his numerous rivals might surpass him in a particular attribute ; but in his combination of great attributes Lord Derby towered above them all. The consciousness of possessing such a chief was a host in itself. Despair was not to be thought of while Teucer was the *dux* and *auspex*. With the Earl at his head, the most cowardly Conservative still felt that he could look public opinion in the face, and glory in the name he bore. His presence diffused over the whole connexion a certain high-bred air which kept up the respect of the British public, and made it appear somehow to be the more gentlemanly side of the two. In the qualities which produce impressions of this nature there has been no man in this century capable of coping with Lord Derby. Of the

wonderful reconstruction of the Conservative party during the last twenty years we shall say more when we come to the career of Mr Disraeli. But that it was possible to reconstruct it at all is due in great measure to the ægis flung over its discomfiture by the imposing figure of Lord Derby.

The fourteenth Earl of Derby was born at Knowsley, the family seat in Lancashire, on the 29th of March 1799. He received the usual education of an English gentleman at Eton and at Christ-Church, where he carried off the Chancellor's prize for Latin verse in 1819. At a time when studious noblemen were less common than they are now, while good Latin verse was much more so, this classic triumph was a greater distinction than it would be at the present day. After giving this assurance of scholarship, Mr Stanley (his grandfather did not die till 1834) hastened to plunge into the more stormy sphere of politics, for which his eloquence, his intrepidity, and his buoyant energy so well qualified him. At his first entry into Parliament, however, there was a lull in the political atmosphere,—that lull which intervened between the death of Queen Caroline in 1820, and the death of Lord

Liverpool in 1827. It was in 1821 that Mr Stanley first entered the House of Commons as member for Stockbridge, a nomination borough belonging to the Grosvenor family. At this time the Reform question had gone to sleep ; and the abolition of Roman Catholic disabilities and negro slavery were the two great questions of the day. But it was on neither of these that the young orator made his first appearance. For three years he was a silent member, and then, in 1824, he selected a motion of Mr Hume's for inquiry into the Irish Church whereon to flesh his maiden sword. At this time he had just completed his twenty-fifth year. His abilities and his force of character were known ; and he had doubtless been welcomed with enthusiasm by the Whig party, to which his family had latterly adhered. But probably no one suspected the powers which he was shortly to exhibit, or imagined for a moment that he was likely to soar far above the level of the other rising young Whig, then in his thirty-first year, Lord John Russell. The speech which he made in reply to Mr Hume on the 6th of May seems at once to have made a deep impression. Mr Hume's reply was chiefly devoted to answering

it ; and he bestowed compliments upon it quite different from those which are paid as a matter of course to every young debutant who acquits himself with reasonable credit. But his warmest panegyrist was no less an authority than Plunkett, who congratulated at once the Parliament of England and the House of Stanley on this accession to the efficiency of the one, and the glories of the other. In this very able speech he exposed many of the exaggerations which had got abroad about the Irish Church, and declared himself unreservedly hostile to any appropriation of ecclesiastical revenues to secular purposes. Exactly ten years later he was to retire from the Cabinet, and abandon the Whigs for ever, because they shrunk from this position. Forty-three years ago he used the following memorable words, which have by no means lost their significance at the present day :—" He believed that the four great evils under which Ireland laboured were, the want of a resident gentry, the want of capital, the want of employment, and the want of education. All these four wants would be materially increased by diminishing the income of the clergy."

Mr Stanley continued to rise in reputation till

the accession of his party to office, when he was made Irish Secretary, an appointment which he held about two years and a half. During the Reform fight he greatly distinguished himself, both in Parliament and out ; and one of the best known stories of the time, is that of his delivering a fiery political invective from the table in Brook's supper-room. But it was in the first Reformed Parliament that he first showed his full strength. Roman Catholic Emancipation had not pacified Ireland. The abolition of the Established Church, and even the repeal of the Union, were now confidently demanded ; and that unhappy country, from one end to the other, reeked with incendiarism and assassination, which were intended to intimidate Government. Under these circumstances, the first act of Lord Grey's ministry in 1833 was to introduce an Irish Coercion Bill, which passed the House of Lords pretty readily in about ten days. On the 27th of February it was brought into the House of Commons ; and from that day to the 29th of March the House was one scene of incessant and violent conflict between the Irish Party headed by O'Connell with certain of the English Radicals,

and the English Government supported by the bulk of the Conservatives. The brunt of the battle fell upon the Irish Secretary, Mr Stanley ; and well indeed did he justify the confidence of the minister who had advanced him to that onerous post. Government, indeed, was secure of large majorities at every stage of the bill. But in spite of large majorities, a government may be greatly discredited in public estimation by a succession of powerful attacks, which it merely rolls back again by the *vis inertia* of numbers. That Lord Grey's Government was not so discredited by the fierce and unscrupulous oratory of O'Connell and Shiel, was mainly due to Mr Stanley. Lord Althorpe was no speaker. Neither Lord Palmerston nor Lord John Russell, nor Sir J. Graham took much part in the debates. And the only ally of any weight who rendered any effectual support to the Irish Secretary was the ex-minister, with whom he was so soon to unite himself, Sir Robert Peel. But even Sir Robert had not the peculiar debating power, and the bold fighting temperament which were required in a contest with the unblushing audacity and vigorous eloquence of O'Connell. With

these necessary qualities Mr Stanley was pre-eminently endowed, and he is said to have been the only man in Parliament of whom O'Connell ever was afraid. Mr Stanley did not mince matters. Without ever descending from the level of the high-bred gentleman and the accomplished scholar, he nevertheless flung back upon the tribune's head such torrents of scalding sarcasm, such a wealth of felicitous retort, and such sudden jets of luminous logic, that more than once his great antagonist was cowed, and acknowledged, by his tone of whining deprecation, that in the heir of the House of Derby he had encountered more than his match. Indeed, so exasperated were O'Connell and his clique at the fearless exposure of their true policy, which had been effected by the ministerial champion, that as soon as the bill was passed, and his work done, it was judged more prudent that the Secretary for Ireland should take the place of Secretary for the Colonies, in order to smooth the way for a reconciliation with the Repealers.

- Irish questions still continued to form the staple subjects of legislation ; and as soon as the Coercion Bill was got out of the way, the Irish Church Tem-

poralities Act was brought forward—*fata armis*—big with the fate of ministries, and with lasting consequences to the political future of Mr Stanley. This first Bill of 1833 was, upon the whole, approved of, even by Sir Robert Peel, and was of course supported by Mr Stanley. It provided for the extinction of ten bishoprics, of Church cess, tithe, and of first-fruits, the income derived from the latter to be made up partly from the incomes of the extinct sees, partly by a tax upon all benefices above the value of £200 a year. A clause * enacting that any increase of revenue accruing to the Irish Church from the improved management of ecclesiastical property should be handed over to the State, was withdrawn, on the motion of Mr Stanley, and the Bill was then read a third time in the House of Commons. But in 1834 this same question of appropriation was brought before the House again in another shape, chiefly owing, it was thought, to an act of indiscretion on the part of Lord John Russell; and this time Lord Althorpe found it impossible to avoid committing himself to an acceptance of the principle. As soon

* The famous "appropriation clause."

as the intention of Government to issue a commission of inquiry into the state of the Irish Church, with whose duties it should not be inconsistent to recommend the alienation of Church property to lay uses, became known, Mr Stanley, now become Lord Stanley, and Sir James Graham, at once sent in their resignations. They were followed by the Duke of Richmond and Lord Ripon. Lord Stanley's explanatory speech was delivered on the 2d of June, and is, like all the speeches which he delivered about this time, eloquent and impetuous. But his *torrens dicendi* did not prevent him from laying down, in the clearest language, and with unanswerable logic, the reasons which made him quit the ministry, and dread the future. "This doctrine of proportion," said he, "is pregnant with danger, as applied to Ireland; and if once admitted, is certain to be applied to England. If you once admit this doctrine, that the majority in every parish is the religion of the State, you acknowledge at once that the State has no religion." The "appropriation" clause continued to be the bone of contention down to 1838, when the question was finally set at rest by a compromise, according

to which the Whigs were to withdraw the appropriation clause, and the Conservatives to accept the Irish Municipal Corporations Act,—a result which was on the whole regarded as a Conservative triumph.

The seceders of 1834 did not at first join the regular Conservative party, or become members of the Conservative Government of 1835. But when the Whigs now showed their determination to adopt a more Radical policy, and when the notorious Lichfield House Compact between themselves and the O'Connellites became generally known, Lord Stanley and his friends crossed over to the Opposition benches, and worked steadily and successfully with Sir Robert Peel till another and more fatal schism in turn tore asunder the Conservatives, and dispersed them upon every coast. In Sir Robert Peel's ministry of 1841, Lord Stanley was Colonial Secretary, and proved himself a most able coadjutor in the work of that illustrious statesman. But with the year 1846 came that unhappy rupture which undid the whole work of the last fourteen years, and left it to be done over again by a hand no less skilful, and a brain more subtle and daring than Sir Robert Peel's. Had Lord Stanley at this time

sat in the Lower House of Parliament, it is probable that the political history of the last twenty years might have been very different. But in 1844 he had been raised to the House of Lords by the title of Baron Stanley of Bickerstaffe; and in his absence the large majority of the Conservative party, who had revolted from Sir Robert Peel, were left without any leader in whom they could place implicit confidence. They were yet to learn that they still possessed one within their ranks who would equal, if he did not even leave far behind, the fame of Sir Robert Peel, as he was in originality of mind, in genuine eloquence, and in dauntless courage, undoubtedly his superior. But at that time his great capacity was unsuspected, and, to the public eye, the bulk of the party in the House of Commons showed to great disadvantage beside the little constellation of which Sir Robert was the centre. Removed to the House of Lords, Lord Stanley did all he could for his party; he gave them the immense moral support of his great name and rank, and his high character. But he could not do for them what he could have done in the House of Commons. Perhaps, upon the whole, it was as well

for the party that this was so. Had they ever returned to office as avowed Protectionists, which must have been the case in 1846, 1847, or 1848, it would have been worse for them in the long-run. Even as it was, they had not in 1852 entirely shaken off the taint ; and it was this, and nothing else, which prevented them from securing a majority at the general election. Lord Stanley, who in 1851 had succeeded to the earldom, was well aware of this. In that very year he declined to take office when solicited to do so, on the proffered resignation of Lord Russell. And even in 1852 it was really rather as a rehearsal than as anything else, that he carried his friends into Downing Street. A chance was again offered him in 1855 on the resignation of Lord Aberdeen, which he somewhat unaccountably declined, and so left the field open to Lord Palmerston, who did not hesitate to fill the vacant space. During the first ministry of Lord Palmerston, Lord Derby distinguished himself chiefly by the severity of his criticisms on the terms of peace concluded by Lord Clarendon at Paris, in which the Circassians were forgotten, and the maritime rights of England sacrificed. In the same year

he delivered one of his most remarkable speeches against the Government proposal to create Baron Parke a peer for life, and succeeded in defeating the ministry by a majority of thirty-five. The year following he moved a vote of censure upon Government for their share in the Chinese war, provoked by the seizure of the notorious *Arrow*, an example which, being followed by the House of Commons, where it ended in the defeat of the ministry, caused a dissolution of Parliament, and the return, contrary to expectation, of a larger Palmerstonian majority. The Premier, however, was now too strong; and provoking another rebellion in 1858, he was this time dethroned to make way for the second administration of Lord Derby. The great event of this administration was the Derby Reform Bill; and the great feature of the Derby Reform Bill, was the placing of the town and county franchise on one equal basis of £10. Lord Derby had come to the conclusion that if the £10 franchise were departed from, there was no alternative but household suffrage. He tried the one plan in 1859, and failed; and has tried the other in 1867, and succeeded. After his expulsion from power in

1859, Lord Derby devoted himself to keeping a watchful eye on the foreign policy of Lord John Russell, whose doings in the matter of Savoy, Italy, Poland, and Denmark, supplied the great orator with an inexhaustible fund of materials for amusing his delighted audience. After the general election of 1865, when a large majority was secured to the Ministerial side of the House by the popularity of Lord Palmerston, the chances of a third administration of Lord Derby appeared more remote than ever. But the death of Lord Palmerston in the autumn of that year, followed by the accession of Mr Gladstone to the post of leader of the House of Commons, and supplemented by another of those half measures on the subject of Reform, which seem the peculiar outcome of Lord Russell, broke the great majority to pieces, and paved the way for the return of Lord Derby to the office which he now holds.

It has often been predicted that when Lord Derby once saw his party fairly landed in power, he would retire from his present position into the private life which he prefers. We should be sorry to see such predictions realised ; but were Lord Derby so to act, he would be acting only in con-

formity with our own conception of his character. His tastes do not incline him towards that kind of position which is so grateful to such natures as Lord Palmerston's. His temperament often reminds us of Charles Fox, in whose character a kind of reckless disregard of public opinion was the predominant feature. The "Rupert of debate" frequently exhibits the same quality. He dislikes the noisy, self-complacent commonplaces, the "Philistine" view of things in general, which is sure to characterise the dominant party in this country when it has been the dominant party very long. His Whiggism in 1824 was the scorn of a great man for the vulgarism of the dominant Tories. His Toryism of late years has been the scorn of a great man for the vulgarism of the dominant Liberals. He hates the slightest semblance of dictation and bullying, and all the mean arts by which these offences are aggravated. O'Connell made him a Conservative; Cobden made him a Protectionist; Mr Bright has since then added depth and breadth to that innate antipathy; while over and above all and each of these causes has been the shallow self-laudation, the smug optimism of

the English middle classes, and their representatives in the daily press. Lord Derby, we fear, has taken a wicked delight in occasionally aiming a hit at this obnoxious spirit, and has been quite heedless of any misconstruction that might be placed upon his words, when he saw a good opportunity for dropping a passing sarcasm. Lord Derby, we suspect, cares very little whether Catholics are muzzled or unmuzzled; whether Italy be one kingdom or several. But he cares a good deal about the fustian which is talked on these subjects, and is bored by the eternal obtrusiveness, the unconscious impertinence, and the whitey-brown monotony of newspaper Liberalism; for of course there is another kind of Liberalism which few men of brains and education are without. But he "scunners," as the Scotch say, at the former kind, and so he gets up in the House of Lords and shoots out some stinging metaphor, or some too plain illustration, of which he never hears the last for years. But Lord Derby is essentially a liberal man. It is the illiberality of Liberalism at which he cannot help turning up his nose. And we have no doubt that he has read the speeches of Mr Lowe against his own Reform Bill

with as much zest as he heard five and thirty years ago the speeches of Sir Charles Wetherell and Mr Croker against the Reform Bill of Lord Grey.

It is no doubt an integral part of Lord Derby's creed that this country should be governed by the aristocracy. But then he probably believes that, come what may, it always will. This was Fox's creed. He had that degree of faith in his own order that he thought reform bills and extended franchises, and all sorts of popular liberties, might be lavished right and left without affecting its ascendancy. This kind of Liberalism, you will see, is quite distinct from that popular Liberalism which would make the first last, and the last first. Lord Derby's Conservatism is not that selfish and narrow-minded Conservatism which looks exclusively to the till. It is the Conservatism of a scholar, fortified by the experience of a statesman. But what it means is, that the many in all well-governed states must, as a rule, be taken care of by the few; that gentlemen are the best rulers; that knowledge is better than ignorance; and that we can find more political wisdom in a chapter of Aristotle than we can find in a banker's book.

MR GLADSTONE.

It is to be observed that Mr Gladstone and Mr Disraeli naturally run in couples. They are of nearly the same age, they entered Parliament during the same period, and they were for some little time rivals for the leadership, not indeed of *the* Conservative party, but of *a* Conservative party, which it was thought possible at one time might be formed by a reconciliation between the Derbyites and the Peelites. But there is a still more interesting point of view from which they may be compared than even this. As long as Mr Gladstone was a Conservative,—may we not add even now?—he and Mr Disraeli represented the two different yet parallel lines of thought on which Conservative ideas proceed. Mr Disraeli's Conservatism is poetical, historical, and feudal; Mr Gladstone's was logical, scholastic, and ecclesiastical. Both were apart from that Conservatism which is entirely

without ideas, and which, by a popular euphemism, is styled "practical." Mr Gladstone's "platform" was the less secure one of the two, because the spirit of the age showed a strong disposition to pull down the beams on which it rested; and, indeed, in 1828 and 1829 it had been so seriously shaken, that Mr Gladstone after some years found it no longer trustworthy. But it was better understood than the other; was decidedly more popular with the clergy; and it placed at Mr Gladstone's disposal all the best brains of the High Church party. This fact has been of inestimable service to him during his whole career. He has been the Church's favourite; and none but Englishmen can understand all which that means in England. He has had, moreover, the benefit of all that *éclat* which still belongs to classical scholarship. The old Eton and Christ-Church man, the double-first, the adept at Virgilian quotations, seemed to English gentlemen more like one of themselves than the preacher of this new Toryism, which, as the middle-aged dandy says in "Coningsby," "required a doosed deal of history and all that sort of thing," who had been neither at public school nor university, and wanted, so to

speak, the hall-mark of the regular metal. That form of Toryism, which before Mr Disraeli's time was the noblest form which still survived in England,—the Toryism of the cloister and the manor-house, as M. Guizot so happily expresses it,—found a perfect exponent in Mr Gladstone.

Mr Gladstone has two sides to his character, much more strongly marked than are commonly to be seen in the same person. He is a compound of Oxford and Manchester, which is probably unique; and the two institutions in connexion with which his name will descend to posterity are the Church and the Exchequer. We have no reason to suppose that on questions of Church doctrine and discipline his opinions have changed from the time when he published his work on Church and State. What has changed has been his estimate of the expediency of still contending for their union. It will possibly be thought by posterity that Mr Gladstone's mission in politics was to throw the shield of his great name over the Anglican Church, while the old Church and State doctrine was passing through the valley of the shadow of death. It will have been Mr Gladstone's care to see that the dissolution of that tie was ac-

complished with as little injury as possible either to the Anglicanism or the Catholicity, to the traditions, the social rank, or the ancient revenues of what is now called the "Establishment." Mind we are not predicting, much less recommending, the separation of Church and State. We only mean that, in our opinion, that is the contingency which is ever present to the mind of Mr Gladstone. He is, we are confident, a sincere friend to the Church ; but there comes a time to almost all institutions when the truest friend is he who counsels the surrender of ground no longer tenable, before the adversary is provoked to anger by unavailing resistance. We do not say that such a time has come to the Church of England. But should it ever come, we have no doubt of the way in which the friendship of Gladstone will display itself.

Mr Gladstone's financial mission has been to hand down and develop the principles of the late Sir Robert Peel. The key-stone of that system is that the increase of consumption which follows the reduction of duties will always more than compensate the revenue for the temporary loss incurred. In conformity with this theory, the reduction of

duties which was effected by Mr Gladstone from 1859 to 1866 was something unprecedented. The two best remembered of them will be the wine duty and the paper duty ; but a host of other commodities, too numerous to be mentioned, have been cheapened during the same period, without inflicting any loss on the revenue from which it has not speedily recovered. But we fancy for all this it will be the Gladstone of Oxford, the scholar, the Anglican, and the mystic, who will be the most familiar to after generations, rather than the Gladstone of Manchester, the economist, the arithmetician, and the man of business.

Mr Gladstone was born at Liverpool in the year 1809, of a mercantile family, possessed of considerable wealth. He was educated, as we have already stated, at Eton and Oxford, and seems never to have hesitated about what career in life he should adopt. At the age of twenty-three, he was returned to the House of Commons by the borough of Newark and the Duke of Newcastle, who was, like himself, a true blue and no-surrender Tory. These were the men who stood aloof from Peel because they thought him wanting in principle, as

Mr Disraeli stood aloof, because he thought him wanting in prescience. Even the present generation has not forgotten the Duke of Newcastle, one of the largest, frankest, and most noted of the old borough proprietors. But he was a perfectly honest man as far as his lights went. And the discernment which he showed in singling out Mr Gladstone for one of his few surviving boroughs, must always be remembered in his favour. However, in those days an Oxford double-first was still something, and the old Duke was a man to feel the full force of the tradition. Probably he reasoned that, if all the House of Commons had been Oxford double-firsts, Aldborough, and Boroughbridge, and East Retford would still have had their five votes. However, in came Mr Gladstone, who forthwith proceeded to do exactly the same thing as Mr Disraeli did ten years later, to form a party, namely, which should feel firmer ground beneath its feet than what Sir Robert Peel stood on. He did not originate a young England, but he became "The rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories, who follow reluctantly and mutinously a leader whose experience and eloquence are indispensable

to them, but whose cautious temper and moderate opinions they abhor."* In 1838 he published that work on Church and State, in which he boldly flung down the gauntlet to expediency, heresy, Erastianism, latitudinarianism, and dissent. This was Mr Gladstone's position, then, when Sir Robert Peel formed his second administration in 1841.

The Toryism of Mr Gladstone it came within the capacity of Sir Robert Peel to understand and appreciate. Such a Tory as that, Sir Robert had himself been. Both were Christ-Church men, both were double-firsts, both were, so to speak, "free," of the country gentleman party. Moreover, Mr Gladstone, whatever the intensity of his opinions presented to the outside world all the qualities which Sir Robert loved. His mercantile origin was another bond of union between them. In 1835 Mr Gladstone was made Under-Secretary for the Colonies. In 1841 he was made Vice-President of the Board of Trade.

But the original sin of the Conservative Party, as reconstructed by Sir Robert Peel, soon became apparent. A proposition was made to afford some

* Macaulay.

state-relief to the Irish Roman Catholics. The Maynooth Grant became a Government measure. Here was a glaring recognition of heresy on the part of a Sovereign bound to uphold the truth. Here was the cloven foot of expediency peeping from under the voluminous robes of Conservatism. To do Mr Gladstone justice, he did not hesitate for one moment. He saw the cursed thing and he fled from it, in other words, he retired from the Peel administration. Yet it must be confessed that his conduct at this time requires some explanation, for though he had retired from the Ministry, which was about to violate the principle he had laid down in his work on Church and State, he nevertheless spoke and voted in favour of the measure, and materially assisted its passage through the House of Commons. The resignation of Mr Gladstone in 1844 was followed by the resignation of Lord Stanley in 1845, upon the Corn Law question, and the vacant place was offered to Mr Gladstone, who at once accepted it. But in presenting himself for re-election at Newark, he found that his seat was forfeited, and he remained out of Parliament for two years, at the expiration of

which he was returned, in 1847, by the University of Oxford.

From 1847 to 1853 Mr Gladstone acted with those gentlemen who, by their adherence to Sir Robert Peel's financial changes, had acquired the appellation of Peelites. These numbered at first about a hundred and fifty; the remaining Conservatives were about two hundred; so that Lord John Russell carried on the Government for several years with only a minority of the House. In process of time, however, a good many of the Peelites came back to the Conservative party; and when Lord Derby took office in 1852, their relative proportions were very considerably changed. The leaders of that party, however, Mr Gladstone, Mr Herbert, Sir James Graham, and Mr Cardwell, still stood aloof; and though it was permitted to be known that Mr Disraeli would have resigned the lead of the House of Commons to Mr Gladstone, this gentleman declined the proffered bait, and refused to join his former colleague. On the Government Budget, Mr Gladstone made the great opposition speech in reply to Mr Disraeli, which was thought to have had some effect on the divi-

sion, a majority of nineteen deciding against Ministers, who forthwith resigned, and made way for the Aberdeen administration, in which Mr Gladstone at once became Chancellor of the Exchequer. He shared the fall of that Ministry in 1855, and again remained out of office till 1859. In this interval he distinguished himself by a pertinacious resistance to the Divorce Bill, by his speech against Ministers in the celebrated Chinese debate of 1857, and by joining in the vote of censure on Lord Palmerston in 1858 for his alleged obsequiousness to France. In 1858, however, as in 1855 and in 1852, he declined—though not we believe without considerable hesitation—to join Lord Derby's Government. But he sat on the Ministerial Benches; he supported the Conservative Reform Bill in all its stages; he accepted from Lord Derby his mission to the Ionian Islands; and he opposed the vote of want of confidence which Lord Russell carried against Ministers. So marked, indeed, had been his support of Lord Derby's Government, that his immediate acceptance of office under Lord Derby's enemies gave rise at the time to much unfavourable criticism.

Mr Gladstone's unwillingness to take office in a Cabinet formed under the leadership of Lord Derby, is susceptible of more than one explanation. He himself always threw the blame upon his Peelite friends, alleging that he felt bound in honour not to desert them, or to take office without them. He had no personal reason, he said, for not accepting Lord Derby's offer. It is very likely he really believed that he had not. But he may have felt instinctively that there was no longer room in one party for Mr Disraeli and himself, and he must have seen that Mr Disraeli had by that time reached a position which forbade him to be any man's inferior in the House of Commons.

From 1859 to 1865 Mr Gladstone pursued his career as a financial reformer with general satisfaction to the public. It was observed of him on one or two occasions, when the illness of Lord Palmerston left the management of the House of Commons to Mr Gladstone, that nature did not seem to have fitted him for this particular position. And when, after Lord Palmerston's death, he became leader of the House of Commons in reality, this suspicion ripened into certainty. In this defect we

see nothing to Mr Gladstone's discredit. It might be partly natural, partly owing to want of practice ; but it is no slur upon his intellect or his statesmanship. The management of the House of Commons is a task completely *sui generis*. A very inferior man to Mr Gladstone may possess it in a much larger degree. It requires a kind of tolerance of stupidity ; a slight dash of good-humoured cynicism ; a remarkable power of watching and appraising small circumstances ; and, though last not least, a good appetite, and a good digestion. Mr Gladstone had never been leader of a party, and had not, therefore, learned the first ; the second is quite foreign to his character ; the third only comes with experience ; the fourth and fifth are too frequently denied to men of Mr Gladstone's temperament. Yet a man may be a profound statesman and philosopher without possessing any one of them.

It was bad management which wrecked the Reform Bill of 1866, as it was good management which saved the Reform Bill of 1867. But the last two sessions must have taught invaluable lessons to Mr Gladstone, who will probably not repeat the mistakes which have cost himself and friends so dear.

Mr Gladstone's views on foreign politics have always been generous, though sometimes too impulsive. Nationality, especially when supported by classic associations, has always found in him a warm friend ; and oppression a sincere enemy. He has never allowed his ecclesiastical sympathies to blind him to clerical misgovernment ; and of all the great popular movements of the last nineteen years he has been the ready and consistent supporter.

It has indeed often been doubted whether Mr Gladstone's present position is entirely satisfactory to himself. It is to be observed that in his orations before great public meetings, when statesmen are usually expected to throw off a little of the reserve which necessarily controls them in Parliament, Mr Gladstone seldom speaks of the future. His language exhibits none of that calm and settled confidence in the relations between himself and his party which mark the speeches of the late Sir Robert Peel, of Lord Russell, and Lord Derby. In Mr Gladstone's connexion with the Liberal party we see not so much the deep and quiet sympathies of wedded love, as the passion, the jealousy, and the abandonment to the present moment, which are

characteristic of a frailer tie. Time will tell the truth. Mr Gladstone is not yet sixty; but if health and strength be vouchsafed him for another ten years, less likely things have happened than that the evening of his political career should fulfil the promise of its dawn.

MR DISRAELI.

THE Right Honourable Benjamin Disraeli, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and leader of the House of Commons, was born in the year 1805, at Bradenham House, in Buckinghamshire. His father was that Isaac Disraeli, who, as author of the "Curiosities of Literature," is familiar to all lovers of quaint learning and graceful humour. The elder Disraeli was sprung from a Jewish family of the purest, or Sephardim race, that, namely, which has never left the shores of the Mediterranean. His father, the statesman's grandfather, the son of a Venetian merchant, settled in England in 1748, where he lived for nearly seventy years, and died in 1817, at the age of ninety. Isaac was born in 1766; he married in 1802 a Miss Bassevi, by whom he had four children, and died at Bradenham in 1848. The Chancellor of the Exchequer appears to combine

in his own person the characteristics of both his father and grandfather—the literary and imaginative turn of the author of the “Curiosities,” with the practical, business-like sagacity of the successful merchant.

Influenced, doubtless, to some extent, by the example of his father, Mr Disraeli at his first entry into life seemed inclined to make a profession of literature : and for nearly ten years his pen was prolific of novels, political essays, and letters upon public affairs. His first work of fiction, published in 1826, made a considerable sensation. But its author did not stay long in England to enjoy his fame. Shortly after the publication of “Vivian Grey” Mr Disraeli went abroad, and in the course of some four or five years’ travel he visited most of the spots famous either for natural beauty or historical associations in Europe and Asia Minor. But the political changes which were at that time taking place at home perhaps told him that the opportunity had at length arrived for making the grand experiment of life, and securing a seat in the House of Commons. In the summer of 1832 the Reform Bill became law. Parliament was imme-

diately dissolved, and Mr Disraeli hurried to England, and issued an address to the electors of High Wycombe.

Mr Disraeli was supported, at first, by a combination of Radicals and Tories against the Whig candidate ; but the former party, discovering that his Radicalism was something very different from their own, deserted him at the poll, and he was defeated by a small majority. In the following year he issued an address to the electors of Marylebone, on the same principles ; but the expected vacancy not occurring, he was a second time disappointed of his object. In the autumn of 1834 came a great political catastrophe. The Radicals had proved intractable. The king had plucked up his spirits. Lord Grey resigned ; Lord Melbourne was dismissed ; and Mr Disraeli once more issued an address to the electors of High Wycombe. It was published afterwards, with the title of "The Present Crisis Examined." This performance shows his mind in a transitional state, as was the case with other and more eminent politicians at that period of transition. It shows no more. But by the spring of 1835 he had come to the conclusion that

the reasons which formerly induced him to stand aloof from the Conservatives were no longer binding, and at the general election in April, he contested the borough of Taunton on Conservative principles. He was again defeated, and again fell back upon literature. In this year he published his "Vindication of the British Constitution," addressed to Lord Lyndhurst, who was a warm admirer of the young and original politician; and in this essay he broaches all those ideas on the subject of English history which were afterwards more fully developed in "Coningsby" and "Sybil." In 1836 he brought out his letters of "Runnymede," a series of attacks on the administration of Lord Melbourne. But he was now about to pass on to another stage, and to take his final farewell of literature as a literary man. In the summer of 1837 the king died, and at the ensuing general election Mr Disraeli was returned for Maidstone.

During the whole of the above period, *i.e.*, from 1832 down to his entry into Parliament in 1837, Mr Disraeli was engaged in a series of personal controversies with O'Connell, with Mr Hume, and with the Whig newspapers, arising out of his alleged

change of principles, and conversion from Radicalism to Conservatism. Did our space permit us, it would be interesting to examine these at greater length, and to show, by quotations from Mr Disraeli's own published letters, that the change, if change there was, was very much slighter than his enemies have represented it to be ; and in fact not one whit more remarkable than that which at the same period drove Sir James Graham and Mr Stanley to the opposition benches. The only mistake which he made was in not seeing that the Reform Bill must be as fatal in the long-run to the Whig oligarchy as to the Tory. However, this delusion was not confined to himself. A revival of the old Whig monopoly was supposed by thousands to be imminent. And the people had not helped to pull down one oligarchy in order only to establish another. How then was this design to be frustrated ? At such a crisis, men are not nice about the choice of weapons, nor peculiarly fastidious about the character of their allies. The Whigs might be resisted either through the new Radical, or the old Conservative, element in the House of Commons. But Sir Robert Peel was organising the Conservative party, on what

seemed to Mr Disraeli essentially a wrong foundation. Instead of tacitly conceding that the Reform Bill was fatal to prerogative, and throwing himself upon the Conservative instincts of the middle classes, he ought at once to have fallen back upon the popular and genuine Toryism of the eighteenth century ; and to have reformed his party, as our ancestors reformed the Church of England, by the faith and practice of its founders. As it was, he was playing the game of his opponents. The suspected design of the Whigs could, it seemed, be more readily defeated by strengthening the hands of that party whose political opinions and social sympathies were equally removed from all suspicion of oligarchy. Mr Disraeli's temporary plunge into Radicalism at this crisis, while always avowing his adherence to monarchical principles, was in a young man something more than excusable.

But in the autumn of 1834, as in the spring of 1835, both the Conservative party and Sir Robert Peel stood in a different position from that of 1833. They were now in office strictly in vindication and assertion of that prerogative which was then exerted for the last time, but which must have seemed to Mr

Disraeli an unexpectedly hopeful symptom of the revival of Toryism. Besides, the Whigs had by this time ceased to be formidable. The mistake of the alarmists, who had seen in the new Whig ministry only another "Bloomsbury gang," was acknowledged by themselves. The conspiracy, if it ever existed, had turned out to be a failure. The same reason for fighting it with the first weapons that came to hand was no longer imperative. Under these circumstances Mr Disraeli's change of ground became perfectly natural. His detractors, who think they have made a great point against him, by saying that his Radicalism in 1832 was nothing else but hatred of Whiggism, do not see that this charge is, at all events, a complete vindication of his conduct in 1835.

To say that, holding these views, the inspiration of study as yet unseasoned by experience, Mr Disraeli was at times betrayed into language which his mature judgment would have disavowed, is only to say that he was human—is only to say what can be said of nineteen men out of every twenty who have deserved the epithet of great. But through all his alleged aberrations he is true to one central

idea—the noxious character of oligarchy, be that oligarchy Whig or Tory. He spoke of the Whig leaders with great respect for their personal character and abilities, and was in the habit of referring to them as authorities on the system of parliamentary government. But against the *principles* of genuine Whiggism, and with this alone he was concerned—he unswervingly protested. This idea might be rational or irrational, practical or unpractical, but Mr Disraeli was always true to it. And in 1832 and 1833 he thought he saw that England was again in danger of falling under the domination from which seventy years before George III. had delivered her. This opinion was not confined to himself; and we shall probably not be thought to have said anything very unjust to that great party if we state our own conviction that such was the hope of his opponents. We are not, finally, to forget, in studying Mr Disraeli's views, that in his eyes the Toryism of George IV.'s reign was just as bad as the Whiggism of George II. But, then, the one was Toryism in its debased form, the other Whiggism in its pure form.

The first ten years which followed Mr Disraeli's

entrance into Parliament sufficed to establish him in the front rank of parliamentary orators, and abundantly justified the very remarkable prediction with which he closed his maiden speech. That essay, which there is no danger of our ever being allowed to forget, was a failure, but it was by no means a common-place failure. The subject on which he spoke was an Irish question of no great interest at the present day, and the young orator pitched his speech in too lofty a key for the occasion. This mistake, with some other peculiarities of which practice very soon cured him, caused the House to listen to him with impatience, and he was obliged to sit down before he had concluded his remarks. He covered his retreat with the following memorable words :—" I am not at all surprised at the reception I have experienced ; I have begun many things several times, and have often succeeded at last. I will sit down now, but the time will come when you will listen to me !" The time *did* come, and sooner than his audience anticipated.

During the remainder of that Parliament Mr Disraeli was studying the House, and preparing himself, by short and unambitious speeches on

subjects which he thoroughly understood, to recover the ground which he had lost. And he soon became known as a speaker from whom something piquant, original, and striking might generally be expected, and who was well worth the attention of his audience if only upon that account. At the general election of 1841 he exchanged Maidstone for Shrewsbury, which he continued to represent till 1847. In the meantime it was being gradually recognised that Mr Disraeli was making a position for himself, and fast advancing towards a height on which those who now professed to look down upon him would have to treat with him as an equal. His parliamentary reputation, which had been steadily rising since 1841, became something more than parliamentary with the publication of "Coningsby" in 1844, and of "Sybil" in 1845. He became the leader of a new party. The old stagers laughed, and pretended to think—perhaps really thought—that politics, propounded through a novel, could be no politics at all. But they were in the wrong, as old stagers occasionally are.

Sir Robert Peel had reorganised the Tory party

on the basis of resistance to all further change in the constitution,* and had rebaptized it by the title of Conservative. Whether it was prescience, or whether it was merely common sense, in Mr Disraeli, which led him to believe that "resistance to further change" was not the best possible watchword to adopt after a great revolutionary triumph, need not now be determined. It is quite clear that he was right; and that the means through which Reform was carried, by teaching the populace their own strength, proportionably weakened what had hitherto been the conservative element of the state, the power of the landed aristocracy. Previous to 1832 that power was a great fact. It might be wrongly directed; the Toryism of George IV. might be, and indeed in some respects was, only the Whiggism of George II. under another name. But whatever it was, it was a real power in the state, and capable of governing the country with considerable success. But with the triumph of the Reform Bill that power passed away for ever, in consequence not more of the destruction of the nomination system than of the virtual abolition of the senatorial veto.

* Not, of course, the kind of changes alluded to at p. 93.

And the error of Sir Robert Peel lay in dreaming that he could construct a great Conservative party after all the Conservative machinery had been swept away, without anything to supply its place : that he could go on upon the old system when everything round him was new,—all the old sanctions subverted, and all the old traditions so rudely shaken as to make it unsafe to lean upon them. Mr Disraeli comprehended the position. He looked round for some other element of stability which should replace the shattered edifice of 1688. He found it as he thought in the royal prerogative. The Whigs had overthrown an oligarchy which the Tories ought never to have adopted ; and were endeavouring once more, under the guise of a popular revolution, to impose their own yoke upon the nation. Now was the time for the Tory party after humbling itself in sackcloth and ashes, to arise purified and strengthened to a sense of its true mission and its ancient functions, and restore in something of its pristine vigour the national monarchy of England.

An interesting essay might be written upon the future of monarchical government within the scope

of which it would fall to examine such views as the above. We must content ourselves with pointing out in this place, that during the last twenty years the progress of European opinion has not, upon the whole, been adverse to what is called imperialism. Pure democracy is generally allowed to be impossible. The "classical republicans" are the mere shadow of a shade. Practically our choice seems limited to one of two things, either monarchy tempered by aristocratic institutions, and to a certain extent independent of popular opinion; or monarchy based upon the people, and emancipated from the check of an aristocracy. On the comparative merits of these two forms of government, we express no opinion. But we may be sure of this, that whatever we subtract from the one theory, is so much added to the other. As democracy spread, and aristocracy began to sink, the need of some single authority, some pivot on which all might turn, would be more and more felt every day. An age of centralisation necessitates a powerful Executive. An age of equality magnifies the stature of the Crown. And considering present tendencies, there seems nothing very fanciful in the supposition that

some Prince of parts and courage might, even within the present century, find himself in the exercise of prerogatives, to which Englishmen have long been unaccustomed.

But there was another institution in this country to which Mr Disraeli had always looked with great confidence, and that was the Church of England. Mr Disraeli has never shrunk from avowing the source to which he owes his theories. He is at the same time monarchical and theocratic ; and he finds the vindication of both monarchy and theocracy in the history of his own ancestors. Nowhere in the world do we find so perfect a prototype of the "Church and King" principle of the seventeenth century as in the High Priest and Lord's Anointed of the Old Testament. The instincts of race are ineradicable ; and while those simpler forms of government which have always prevailed in Asia still retain their charm for men of Mr Disraeli's blood ; so is it equally intelligible that his instincts, and traditions, and imagination should make him love a great national hierarchy founded on great mysteries, and storied with a solemn grandeur, like its own old abbeys and cathedrals.

Accordingly, in the second of his three famous political novels, he addresses himself to the English clergy almost as strongly as to the English laity. There is yet a vacant space to be filled in before we get a complete and rounded picture of Young England. The Church, in mediæval days, at which period of her existence she appeals most strongly to the imagination, if she enjoyed superabundant privileges, discharged no trifling obligations. Out of her purse was defrayed all that is now levied in the shape of poor's rates, and education rates. Was that nothing? It was a state of things, perhaps, that could not be revived. But the Whig oligarchy, when they boasted of their public services should always be made to remember that their ancestors had robbed the poor-box. The working men of England, whether peasantry or artizans, had nothing to thank the Whigs for. The Whigs were not the popular party. The Church, the Sovereign, and the people, if they only knew their own interests, would always pull together against the robbers of Church lands, the violators of hereditary right, and the appropriators of charitable funds.

The politics of "Coningsby" and "Sybil" may,

if regarded as a practical system for immediate use, have been susceptible of ridicule ; but assuredly not of half so much ridicule as those who really so regarded them. They were purely suggestive and tentative. And Young England, if it failed in the letter, succeeded in the spirit. What has been well said of another great movement of the period is almost equally applicable to this. Its *sentiment* was true. And this subtle sentiment penetrated the joints of that harness at which logic might have hewed in vain. The utilitarianism of the age was insensibly softened and humanised. With much that was extravagant on the surface, the fundamental ideas of the Young England creed touched the heart of the rising generation. Men began to feel that the relations between sovereign and subject, between landlord and tenant, between gentle and simple, between priest and parishioner, might be "beautified and sweetened." As far as the movement aimed at a revival merely of ancient customs, it was harmless and ineffective, and in some measure was laughed down. But the spirit which those customs had once represented was awakened from a long sleep ;

and it is impossible to deny that the relations between the different orders of society have benefited much by her revival. "There is a dayspring in the history of this nation," says Egremont to Sybil, "which, perhaps, those only who are on the mountain tops can as yet recognise, for even you are in darkness, and I see a dawn. The new generation of the aristocracy of England are not tyrants, nor oppressors, Sybil, as you persist in believing. Their intelligence, better than that, their hearts, are open to the responsibility of their position. But the work that is before them is no holiday work. It is not the fever of superficial impulse that can remove the deep fixed barriers of centuries of crime and ignorance. Enough that their sympathies are awakened : time and thought will bring the rest." And has it not been so ? And shall any one say that the author of these words had no share in the fulfilment of his own prophecy ? That, indeed, were idle controversy.

Before the publication of these works Mr Disraeli had ceased to be a regular supporter of Sir Robert Peel, though he remained on the Conservative

benches. We have often thought that the relations which existed between these two distinguished men were very like what are said to have existed between Addison and Pope: the one in possession of the throne, cold, jealous, and respectable: the other fighting for recognition, angry, sarcastic, and audacious. It was impossible for the two to have been friends, and it boots not now to inquire which of them was most in fault. But the retirement of Sir Robert Peel from the leadership of the Conservative party left a great opening to Mr Disraeli, which he was not slow to seize. In the autumn of 1848, Lord George Bentinck, who had led the opposition for two sessions, died suddenly of apoplexy, and Mr Disraeli stepped without question into the unrivalled position of leader of the country gentlemen of England.

As our readers well know, the right honourable gentleman never once forfeited the position which, after only eleven years of parliamentary experience, his own abilities had won for him. In 1852, on Lord Derby's first accession to office, Mr Disraeli was placed for the first time in the position which he now fills, and acquitted himself to the complete

satisfaction of his party. He was outvoted on the budget, owing chiefly to the taint of Protection which still clung about the name of Derbyite ; but he had organised a good ministry, had proved his knowledge of men, and had inspired his followers with redoubled confidence in both themselves and him. During the Crimean war, which rapidly followed the accession of the Coalition Ministry, Mr Disraeli and the powerful party which he led signalised themselves by a patriotic support of the administration, and a forbearance from all factious opposition. On the resignation of Lord Aberdeen, her Majesty a second time had recourse to Lord Derby ; who, however, in consequence of the refusal of both Lord Palmerston and Mr Gladstone to take office with him, declined the task of forming an administration. Of this determination we believe Mr Disraeli disapproved. In 1858, however, he was again summoned to power under Lord Derby as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons ; and in 1859 it devolved on him to introduce the first Conservative Reform Bill. Mr Disraeli had foreseen and provided against the possibility that the Conservatives

would some day be called upon to discharge this duty ; and he had taken an early opportunity of anticipating the objection that it was not a fitting duty for Conservatives. As long before as 1848 he had expressed his views upon the subject ; and in the interval had frequently declared, that though it was not with his consent that the settlement of 1832 had been disturbed, he reserved to the Conservative party the full right of dealing with the question now that their opponents had re-opened it. Thus he came to the work of 1859 with clean hands, at all events. And we believe we may say of that bill, that on the whole it was better than any which had preceded, and equal to any which have followed it. He has lately told us that Lord Derby's Cabinet then came to the conclusion, in which we heartily and unreservedly agree, that between the existing £10 franchise and household suffrage there was no trustworthy halting-place. They determined at that time to abide by the former ; and this having been rejected, they have, in 1867, been compelled to fall back upon the latter. The second reading of their first bill was thrown out by a majority of thirty-five. A dis-

solution followed, and in the new parliament a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry was carried by a majority of thirteen. Lord Derby again resigned, and made way for the second ministry of Lord Palmerston ; who, by espousing those Conservatives principles which animated the majority of the nation, and using the liberal phraseology which tickled the majority of the House, retained office to his death.

After the death of Lord Palmerston, in October 1865, the House of Commons re-assembled under the leadership of Mr Gladstone, who had a nominal majority of seventy. But the party which followed Mr Gladstone were like the troopers who pursued Rob Roy ; their heart was not in their work. The majority melted like a snowdrift, and before Midsummer Lord Derby and Mr Disraeli were in office for the third time.

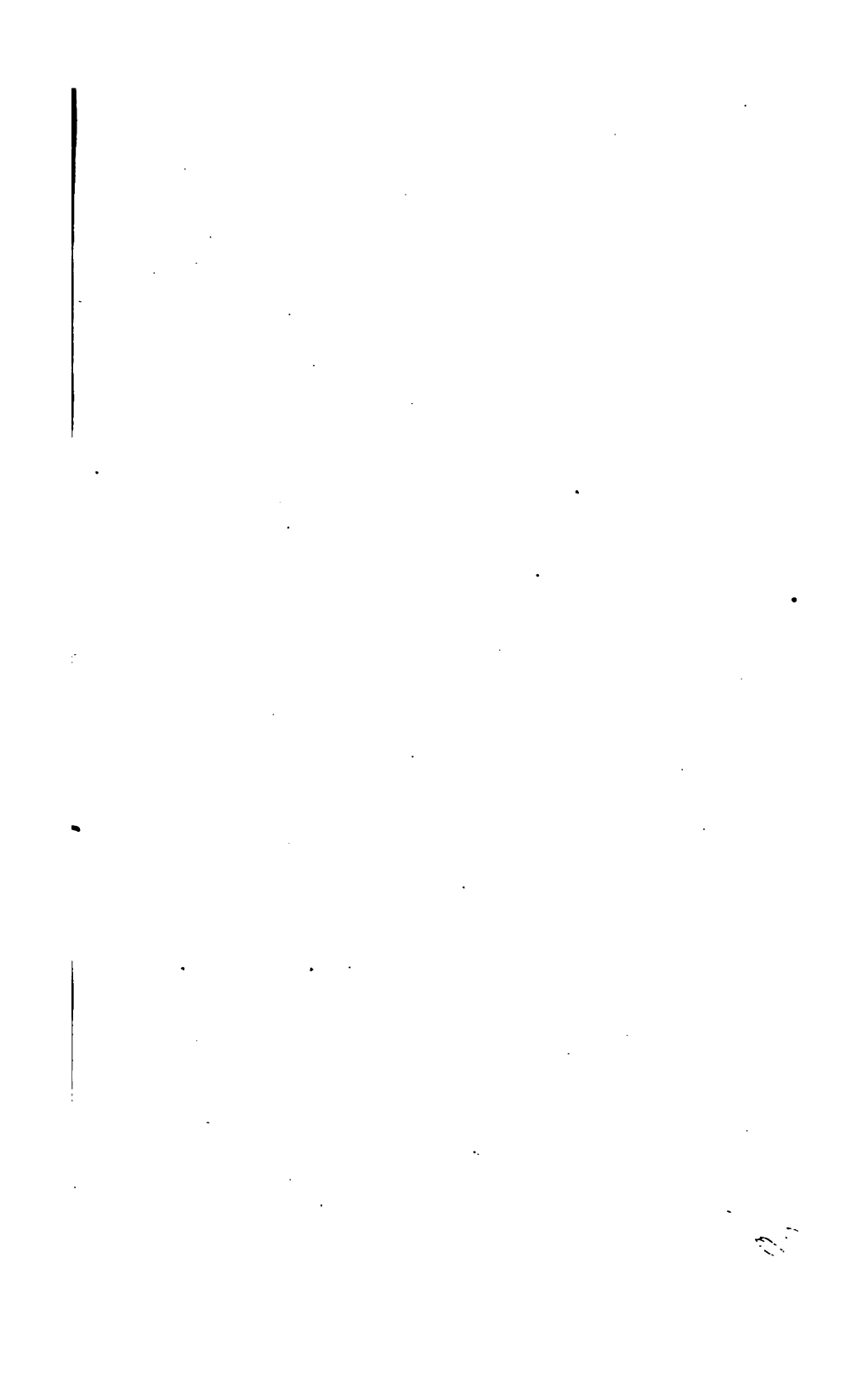
Twelve months have exactly passed away since the meeting of Parliament for the session of 1867, and in that brief space Mr Disraeli has shown himself capable of more than all that his most extravagant admirers have dreamed. With a majority against him in the House of Commons : with an over-

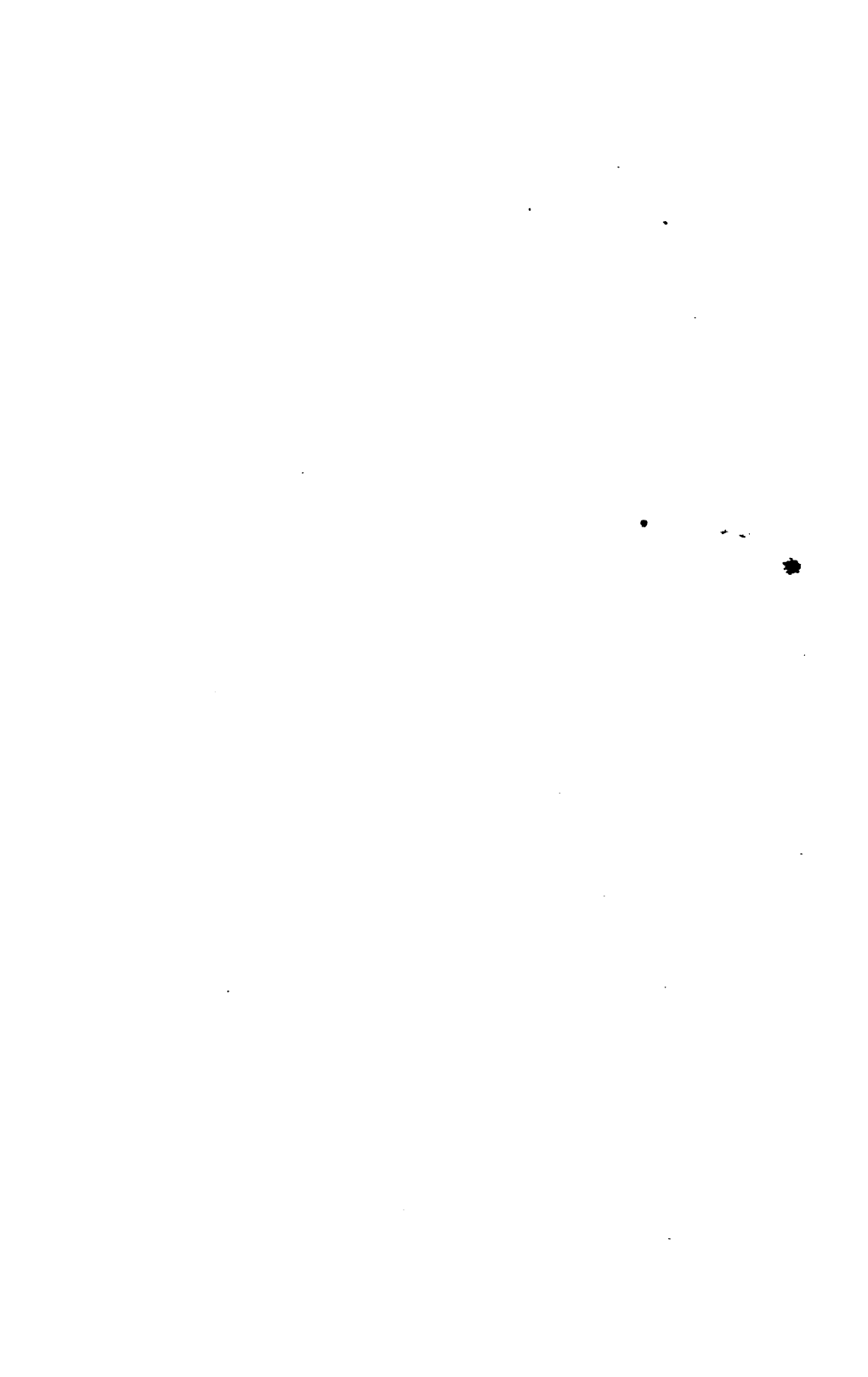
whelming preponderance of the press either bitterly hostile or damning him with faint praise ; wounded by the consciousness that the necessary task he was undertaking must divide his own party and lose him many old friends ; and unsustained in the face of these difficulties by any great public enthusiasm on the subject of reform ; Mr Disraeli has nevertheless carried a Reform Bill in the teeth of an opposition, which to be rightly appreciated must have been witnessed ; and he stands before England at this instant the most remarkable example of what a single individual can accomplish which our parliamentary annals can supply. It is not our business to discuss the merits of the Reform Bill. But the settlement of this great public question is due to a combination of qualities which are very seldom found together, and which friend and foe alike must recognise, perfect tact, unflinching courage, great natural good temper, and eloquence of that brilliant and commanding order which crows resistance and extorts homage.

As the above series was, for the sake of brevity, confined to those members of the Legislature who had been either Prime Ministers or Leaders of the House of Commons, some names will be found omitted which even now belong to our very highest class of statesmen. One in particular—*spes altera Romæ*—I could wish to have included. But if I had once departed from my original plan, this one volume would have swelled into two, and I should have been committed to a longer and more laborious task than I was prepared to undertake.

T. E. K.







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